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Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	09/08 Iraq's instability deepens: failed state?
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/08/world/middleeast/iraq-failed-state-militias.html
GIST	BAGHDAD — On most days in the Iraqi capital, jackhammers and electric drills provide the soundtrack to a construction boom, with multistory restaurants taking shape and a new \$800 million central bank building rising above the skyline.

But this apparent prosperity in parts of Baghdad belies what many Iraqi officials and citizens see as the crumbling foundation of the state — an oil-rich Middle Eastern country that the United States had intended to be free and democratic when it led an invasion 19 years ago to topple the dictator Saddam Hussein.

After the invasion, Iraq's long-sidelined Shiite Muslim majority came to dominate government, and the power struggle between Shiite and Sunni political groups fueled a sectarian war. Now, in a dangerous threat to the country's already tenuous stability, rival Shiite armed groups, the most powerful among them tied to neighboring Iran, are fighting each other, and are beyond the control of the central government.

"Internally, externally, at the political level and at the security level, Iraq is now a failed state," said Saad Eskander, an Iraqi historian. "The Iraqi state cannot project its authority over its territory or its people."

Iraq's weaknesses once again came into sharp relief last week when a stalemate over forming a new government — almost a year after the last elections — exploded into violence in the heart of the capital.

Followers of the influential Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr stormed the heavily guarded Green Zone in an antigovernment protest after Mr. Sadr announced he was withdrawing from politics. Then rival pro-Iranian Shiite paramilitary fighters on the public payroll began shooting at the protesters, and armed members of a Sadr militia emerged to fight them.

Ordered by the prime minister not to shoot at the demonstrators, government security forces were largely sidelined while the rival militias fought it out. After two days of fighting killed 34 people, Mr. Sadr ordered his followers to withdraw from the Green Zone, restoring an uneasy calm.

The violence was rooted in a stalemate over forming a government that has dragged on since the elections in October 2021.

Mr. Sadr's followers won the largest bloc of seats in Parliament, although that was not enough to form a government without coalition partners. When he failed to put together a ruling coalition, the major Iran-backed parties with paramilitary wings — Shiite political rivals to Mr. Sadr — stepped in and tried to sideline him.

Mr. Sadr then turned to his power on the street rather than at the negotiating table, ordering his followers to set up a protest camp at Parliament — a tactic he has used in the past.

"If we discuss post-2003 Iraq, then we have to say it has never actually been a functioning state," said Maria Fantappie of the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, a Swiss-based conflict management organization. "We never had a prime minister with total control of the security forces or the borders."

That Iraq has not collapsed is thanks largely to the [country's immense oil wealth](#). But most citizens never see the benefit of that wealth, suffering through daily electricity cuts, decrepit schools and a lack of health care or even clean water.

Last month, the country's respected finance minister, Ali Allawi, resigned with a stark warning that staggering levels of corruption were draining Iraqi resources and posed an existential threat.

"Vast underground networks of senior officials, corrupt businessmen and politicians operate in the shadows to dominate entire sectors of the economy and siphon off literally billions of dollars from the public purse," Mr. Allawi wrote in his resignation letter to the prime minister. "This vast octopus of corruption and deceit has reached into every sector of the country's economy and institutions: It must be dismantled at all costs if this country is to survive."

Mr. Allawi, who also served as finance minister in 2006, said he was shocked when he returned at “how far the machinery of government had deteriorated” under the domination of special interest groups tied to various countries in the region.

“You have the people who fly off to Tehran, fly off to Amman, fly off to Ankara, fly off to the U.A.E., fly off to Qatar,” he said in an interview with The New York Times in June. “Before, they used to fly off to Washington, but they don’t do that anymore.”

The United States, meanwhile, has increasingly disengaged from the Arab world, focusing mainly on containing Iran and fostering normalization with Israel. For years the target of hostility over its occupation of Iraq, the country now appears to be losing relevance as Shiite militias battle it out for primacy.

Iraq sits on the world’s fourth-largest oil reserves, and oil revenues have both fed corruption and propped up the economy.

According to state and local officials, militias and tribal groups siphon off customs revenue from Iraq’s Gulf port of Umm Qasr. Crossings along the 1,000-mile border with Iran are another source of illicit revenue. Iran-backed militias in Iraq control sectors like scrap metal, and they extort payments for protection from businesses.

Government contracts are another major source of corruption.

Iraq’s health ministry, traditionally run by officials loyal to Mr. Sadr, is the monopoly buyer of almost half the medications imported into Iraq and is considered one of the most corrupt ministries, according to Iraqi officials and outside experts.

Three years ago, Ala Alwan, a former World Health Organization official, resigned as health minister, saying he could no longer fight corruption in the ministry or ward off threats.

Mr. Allawi, in the interview in June when he was still finance minister, described a country that had essentially become ungovernable.

“You can’t do anything but manage daily affairs, given that in this country, there’s a crisis every day,” he said.

With the war in Ukraine driving up oil prices state revenue has recently come from oil exports — a lack of diversification that could prove disastrous as the world increasingly turns to alternative energy sources.

But with dysfunctional ministries and a weak central government, there is no real effort to improve public services or life for the one-quarter of the population estimated by the government to live in poverty.

Large parts of the country suffer from shortages of electricity or clean water — a continuing crisis that fueled widespread protests three years ago, leading to the fall of the government.

Few sectors are as blatantly dysfunctional as the country’s once-respected educational system. For almost seven years, thousands of temporary teachers have worked without pay, waiting for a chance to be hired by the education ministry. The ministry has now begun making payments.

Schools are so overcrowded they operate in shifts, offering only half a day of classes to students. Many schools lack running water or enough toilets. Most are lucky if they have fans in the 100-degree heat.

More than half of Iraqi students drop out before high school. In Baghdad and other cities, children who have left school push wooden carts in outdoor markets or hawk bottles of water to drivers in traffic.

	<p>“We didn’t receive new textbooks this year,” said Um Zahra, a primary schoolteacher who was doing paperwork at the education ministry this week. “We are trying to use old ones,” she added, saying she did not want to give her full name because she did not have her husband’s permission to speak.</p> <p>Um Zahra said her own neighborhood in Baghdad, the second biggest city in the Middle East, had not had regular running water since 2014.</p> <p>There is so little faith in the political system that in Baghdad, voter turnout was about 30 percent in the last elections. Many expect the same corrupt politicians to remain in power thanks to a post-2003 system that ensures key posts for specific religious and ethnic groups.</p> <p>With neighboring Iran and Turkey both frequently breaching Iraqi sovereignty, the weakness of the Iraqi government and state institutions poses a threat to regional stability — as it did in 2014 when the Iraqi army collapsed in the face of an Islamic State assault that conquered large parts of the country.</p> <p>Mr. Eskander, the historian, said Iraq’s instability can be traced back to before Saddam was toppled, when it lost control of some of its borders and territory in the Iran-Iraq war. But he said he still had hope that the country would survive.</p> <p>“A change of leaders — a change of generations — is the only way,” Mr. Eskander said.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/08 Shock waves hit global economy
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/08/business/economy/russia-ukraine-global-economy.html
GIST	<p>Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the continuing effects of the pandemic have hobbled countries around the globe, but the relentless series of crises has hit Europe the hardest, causing the steepest jump in energy prices, some of the highest inflation rates and the biggest risk of recession.</p> <p>The fallout from the war is menacing the continent with what some fear could become its most challenging economic and financial crisis in decades.</p> <p>While growth is slowing worldwide, “in Europe it’s altogether more serious because it’s driven by a more fundamental deterioration,” said Neil Shearing, group chief economist at Capital Economics. Real incomes and living standards are falling, he added. “Europe and Britain are just worse off.”</p> <p>Several countries, including Germany, the region’s largest economy, built up a decades-long dependence on Russian energy. The eightfold increase in natural gas prices since the war began presents a historic threat to Europe’s industrial might, living standards, and social peace and cohesion. Plans for factory closings, rolling blackouts and rationing are being drawn up in case of severe shortages this winter.</p> <p>The risk of sinking incomes, growing inequality and rising social tensions could lead “not only to a fractured society but a fractured world,” said Ian Goldin, a professor of globalization and development at Oxford University. “We haven’t faced anything like this since the 1970s, and it’s not ending soon.”</p> <p>Other regions of the world are also being squeezed, although some of the causes — and prospects — differ.</p> <p>Higher interest rates, which are being deployed aggressively to quell inflation, are trimming consumer spending and growth in the United States. Still, the American labor market remains strong, and the economy is moving forward.</p> <p>China, a powerful engine of global growth and a major market for European exports like cars, machinery and food, is facing its own set of problems. Beijing’s policy of continuing to freeze all activity during Covid-19 outbreaks has repeatedly paralyzed large swaths of the economy and added to worldwide supply chain disruptions. In the last few weeks alone, dozens of cities and more than 300 million people have</p>

been under full or partial lockdowns. Extreme heat and drought have [hamstrung hydropower generation](#), forcing additional factory closings and rolling blackouts.

A troubled real estate market has added to the economic instability in China. Hundreds of thousands of people are [refusing to pay their mortgages](#) because they have lost confidence that developers will ever deliver their unfinished housing units. Trade with the rest of the world took a hit in August, and overall economic growth, although likely to outrun rates in the United States and Europe, looks as if it will slip to its slowest pace in a decade this year. The prospect has prompted China's central bank to cut interest rates in hopes of stimulating the economy.

"The global economy is undoubtedly slowing," said Gregory Daco, chief economist at the global consulting firm EY- Parthenon, but it's "happening at different speeds."

In other parts of the world, countries that are able to supply vital materials and goods — particularly energy producers in the Middle East and North Africa — are seeing windfall gains.

And [India](#) and [Indonesia](#) are growing at unexpectedly fast paces as domestic demand increases and multinational companies look to [vary their supply chains](#). [Vietnam](#), too, is benefiting as manufacturers switch operations to its shores.

Even so, China, the eurozone and the United States together account for roughly two-thirds of the planet's economic activity, and if those powerhouses all slow down, it will be hard for any country to remain insulated from the fallout.

Poorer people, who spend much more of their total incomes on food and energy, are being hit hardest.

In Europe, anxiety about frigid living rooms, shuttered production lines and [head-spinning energy bills](#) this winter ratcheted up this week after [Gazprom](#), Russia's state-owned energy company, declared it would not resume the flow of natural gas through its Nord Stream 1 pipeline until Europe lifted Ukraine-related sanctions.

Daily average electricity prices in Western Europe have reached record levels, according to Rystad Energy, surging past 600 euros (\$599) per megawatt-hour in Germany and €700 in France, with peak-hour rates as high as €1,500.

In the Czech Republic, roughly [70,000 angry protesters, many with links to far-right groups](#), gathered in Wenceslas Square in Prague this past weekend to demonstrate against soaring energy bills.

The German, French and [Finnish](#) governments have already stepped in to save domestic power companies [from bankruptcy](#). Even so, Uniper, which is based in Germany and one of Europe's largest natural gas buyers and suppliers, said last week that it was losing more than €100 million a day because of the rise in prices.

The [European Commission](#), which has scheduled an emergency meeting of energy ministers for Friday, is calling for a cap on wholesale gas prices and an overhaul of [how electricity is priced](#). And in recent days, Germany, Sweden, France and Britain all announced sweeping [billion-dollar relief programs](#) to ease the strain on households and businesses, along with rationing and [conservation plans](#).

The cost of all these measures would be enormous, at a time when government debt levels are already staggering. The worry about perilously high debt prompted the [International Monetary Fund](#) this week to issue a proposal to reform the European Union's framework for government public spending and deficits.

Still, a pitiless and unyielding reality remains: a lack of energy that countries can afford.

At current prices, there is simply not enough to produce the steel, lumber, microchips, glass, cotton, plastic, chemicals and electricity that go into making the food, home heat, garage doors, tampons, bicycles, baby formula, wine glasses and more that consumers want.

The root of the shortage predates the Ukraine war.

Commodity prices started rising in 2020 as countries began emerging from pandemic restrictions, noted Sven Smit, a senior partner at the consulting firm McKinsey & Company. In the United States alone, consumers were, in effect, buying \$1 trillion more goods than expected, based on spending patterns before coronavirus hit.

And the sudden switch in spending on products like new kitchen tiles and cars rather than services like restaurant dining and entertainment added to the problem because more energy and materials are needed to make them.

There is a “depleted supply chain,” more than a broken one, Mr. Smit said. “This is a physical crisis rather than a psychological crisis,” which is different from those that most people remember.

In the past, “you got scared of something, you stopped spending, and then you got more comfortable and spending came back,” Mr. Smit said. “That’s not what’s happening right now. To solve this puzzle, we have to restore supply.”

That puzzle is complicated by the need to produce energy that not only is quickly available and affordable, but also won’t aggravate the calamitous climate change already endangering the planet.

Achieving that goal will take years, rather than months.

In the short term, a limit on energy prices could offer struggling households and businesses relief, but economists are concerned that caps blunt the incentive to reduce energy consumption — the chief goal in a world of shortages.

Central banks in the West are expected to keep raising interest rates to make borrowing more expensive and force down inflation. On Thursday, the European Central Bank is set to again raise interest rates. The U.S. Federal Reserve is likely to do the same when it meets this month. The Bank of England has taken a similar position.

The worry is that the vigorous push to bring down prices will plunge economies into recessions. Higher interest rates alone won’t bring down the price of oil and gas — except by crashing economies so much that demand is severely reduced. Many analysts are already predicting a recession in Germany, Italy and the rest of the eurozone before the end of the year. For poor and emerging countries, higher interest rates mean more debt and less money to spend on the most vulnerable.

“I think we’re living through the biggest development disaster in history, with more people being pushed more quickly into dire poverty than has ever happened before,” said Mr. Goldin, the Oxford professor. “It’s a particularly perilous time for the world economy.”

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HEADLINE	09/08 Heat waves are deadliest natural disasters
SOURCE	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2022/09/08/heat-waves-deadliest-natural-disasters-explained/8011028001/
GIST	SAN FRANCISCO – Heat waves like the one California has been experiencing for the past week are the single most deadly natural disasters the nation faces each year, killing more people than hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, blizzards or extreme cold.

"We never think of heat waves as mass casualty events, but they are," said Kristie Ebi, a University of Washington epidemiologist who studies global health and extreme heat events.

Last year, tornados killed 104 Americans; floods, 146; hurricanes, 12; and lightning, 11, according to the [National Weather Service](#). Meanwhile, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates each year 702 people in the U.S. die from heat – a number believed to be an undercount.

At least 289 people died in the heat dome that hit Washington, Oregon and California in [June 2021](#) alone, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency. At its peak, on June 28, there were [1,090](#) heat-related illness visits to emergency rooms in the region, according to the CDC.

"If it had been anything else, we'd have called it a mass casualty event," Ebi said.

The deaths are even more distressing because they're preventable. "There's no reason people should be dying in heat waves," she said.

Here's why extreme heat can be so dangerous.

How heat can kill

Heat kills when core body temperature, meaning the internal organs, such as the heart, liver, brain and blood, rises. Older people and those with underlying conditions such as diabetes, heart problems or lung disease, are especially at risk.

To cope, the body tries to move the heat away from the core by increasing sweating. This can lead to dehydration, which decreases blood volume and increases strain on the cardiovascular system. Fluid can build up in the lungs, causing acute respiratory distress.

Heat exhaustion, the first phase

Heat exhaustion, the first phase, causes heavy sweat, nausea and possible vomiting and fainting. Blood vessels open up and the heart must work harder to pump. Fluid and salt are lost, leading to electrolyte changes.

Heat stroke can happen fast

Heat stroke begins when sweating ceases and the skin becomes dry and flushed. The gut can begin leaking toxins into the body, triggering an inflammatory response. Body temperature can reach as high as [106 degrees](#) or more within 10 or 15 minutes.

As the internal temperature rises, cells begin to die, causing organ damage. Victims can experience confusion, coma and seizures.

If not checked, death can come within hours.

Even after cooling, heat-related issues can persist

Even if the victim gets to a cooler place, the damage can be lasting.

"Cognitive and organ dysfunction can persist for years following injury and render the injured individual at two to three-times greater risk of death for decades after injury," according to a report on the health risks of extreme heat in the medical journal [The Lancet](#).

Why are heat deaths undercounted?

While hot temperatures kill through heat exhaustion and heat stroke, they can also contribute to deaths from heart attacks, strokes and cardiovascular disease, according to a [report](#) from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Those, rather than heat, can be what's listed on the death certificate, which is why official records tend to undercount them. Looking at just 61% of U.S. population in counties, a [study](#) in the journal Environmental Epidemiology estimated an average of 5,609 deaths attributable to heat each year.

What about heat and climate change?

A national website, [Heat.gov](#), shows real-time data on excessive heat warnings. In the past 30 days, 61 million Americans were under heat alerts.

The problem is expected to [worsen](#) in coming years as climate change increases heat waves' frequency and temperatures. July 2021 was the hottest month ever recorded on Earth and US summers are becoming hotter and deadlier, according to [NOAA](#).

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HEADLINE	09/08 US unveils \$2B Ukraine, Europe aid
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-antony-blinken-government-and-politics-a1f6b3639c6bb69a98bda153de271d93?utm_source=homepage&utm_medium=TopNews&utm_campaign=position_4
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken made an unscheduled visit to Kyiv on Thursday as the Biden administration announced major new military aid worth more than \$2 billion for Ukraine and other European countries threatened by Russia.</p> <p>In meetings with senior Ukrainian officials, Blinken said the Biden administration had notified Congress of its intent to provide \$2 billion in long-term Foreign Military Financing to Ukraine and 18 of its neighbors, including NATO members and regional security partners, that are “most potentially at risk for future Russian aggression.”</p> <p>Pending expected congressional approval, about \$1 billion of that will go to Ukraine and the rest will be divided among Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, the State Department said.</p> <p>It will go to help those countries “deter and defend against emergent threats to their sovereignty and territorial integrity” by enhancing their military integration with NATO and countering “Russian influence and aggression,” the department said.</p> <p>“This assistance demonstrates yet again our unwavering commitment to Ukraine’s future as a democratic, sovereign, and independent state, as well as the security of allies and partners across the region,” it said.</p> <p>Foreign Military Financing, or FMF, allows recipients to purchase U.S.-made defense equipment, often depending on their specific needs.</p> <p>The financing comes on top of a \$675 million package of heavy weaponry, ammunition and armored vehicles for Ukraine alone that Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin announced earlier Thursday at a conference in Ramstein, Germany.</p> <p>That package includes howitzers, artillery munitions, Humvees, armored ambulances, anti-tank systems and more.</p> <p>Austin said that “the war is at another key moment,” with Ukrainian forces beginning their counteroffensive in the south of the country. He said that “now we’re seeing the demonstrable success of our common efforts on the battlefield.”</p> <p>“The face of the war is changing and so is the mission of this contact group,” Austin told the meeting of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group, which was attended by NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and Ukraine’s defense minister as well as officials from allied countries.</p>

Germany and the Netherlands will provide training in demining to Ukrainian soldiers as well as demining equipment, the countries' defense ministers said on the sidelines of the meeting with Austin. The training will be carried out in Germany. The two countries previously joined forces to send howitzers to Ukraine.

Thursday's contributions bring total U.S. aid to Ukraine to \$15.2 billion since Biden took office. U.S. officials said the new commitments were intended to show that American support for the country in the face of Russia's invasion is unwavering.

The announcements came as fighting between Ukraine and Russia has intensified in recent days, with Ukrainian forces mounting a counteroffensive to retake Russian-held areas in the south and east.

Shelling has continued near Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, Europe's largest, with the warring sides trading blame again amid dire warnings from the U.N. atomic watchdog for the creation of a safe zone to prevent a catastrophe.

On Wednesday, the U.S. accused Moscow of interrogating, detaining and forcibly deporting hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians to Russia. Russian officials immediately rejected the claim as "fantasy."

In Kyiv before meeting with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, Blinken visited the U.S. embassy and then the National Specialized Children's Hospital Ohmatdyt, where he saw boys and girls injured during Russian bombardments, including Maryna, a 6-year-old from the city of Kherson who lost a leg after a rocket struck her house.

In the hospital lobby, Blinken also met "Patron," a Jack Russell terrier that has helped Ukraine's military find more than 200 mines laid by Russian forces. Blinken knelt down, petted the dog and presented it with treats, saying the canine was "world famous."

In one ward, Blinken brought a basket of stuffed animals, which the children quickly dangled in front of Patron to get his attention.

Blinken told parents that "the spirit of your children sends a very strong message around the world."

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HEADLINE	09/08 Southern Calif. wildfire continues growing
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/07/us/california-fairview-fire-wednesday/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)The Fairview Fire has now charred more nearly 20,000 acres in the two days it's been burning in Southern California, according to Cal Fire.</p> <p>The fire, which had spread to 19,377 acres and is 5% contained as of late Wednesday, has not shown signs of slowing down, either.</p> <p>"The fire's burning in all directions, on all flanks," said Cal Fire Chief Josh Janssen during a news conference Wednesday morning.</p> <p>"Because of the footprint of the fire, the fire was rapidly progressing towards the federal land and the decision was made to go unified with our federal cooperators so that we can collectively make the decisions that are right for both the public and the citizens in the area," Janssen said.</p> <p>This rapidly growing fire comes as California and many states on the West Coast swelter under a brutal heat wave, which is setting record high temperatures, fueling destructive wildfires and threatening rolling power shutoffs in California. The heat wave could last even longer due to the effects of a strengthening hurricane along Mexico's Pacific coast.</p>

Circuit activity occurred "close in time" to when the deadly Fairview Fire started, Southern California Edison said in a filing Monday, but the company said it is "not conceding that its equipment caused the wildfire."

Another document filed in coordination with the report added that the notification is intended to make California Public Utilities Commission aware of the incident so the agency can conduct an investigation. As a result of the Fairview Fire, Riverside County [declared a local emergency](#). The proclamation has to go before the board of supervisors within seven days to be officially ratified, according to the county's website. The next board meeting is Tuesday.

"The emergency proclamation could help make the county eligible for potential federal and state assistance and cost reimbursement. In addition, the proclamation allows the county to more easily procure needed services and items to respond to the emergency," the county's website said.

The fire has also left evacuation orders and warnings in effect. Schools in the Hemet Unified School District are closed until further notice.

Two people were killed in the fast-moving Fairview Fire that swelled rapidly over parched vegetation. Sgt. Brandi Swan with the California Highway Patrol said Wednesday the two people were family members.

"It appears as though the two victims found in the vehicle were trying to flee the fire," Swan said, adding the victims have not been identified.

A third woman, also a relative of the other victims, was found outside of the vehicle, she said.

"She sustained some major injuries and she's recovering at a hospital," Swan said. "Always when there's a loss, we feel it, always. It is sad to think the fire moved so fast that they weren't able to leave."

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HEADLINE	09/08 Hurricane Kay close path off California
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/08/weather/hurricane-kay-forecast-california/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)More extreme weather is in the forecast for Southern California this week as a hurricane spins in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Mexico.</p> <p>As it moves north, it could bring heavy rainfall and the threat of flash flooding. And -- far from providing relief from California's extreme heat -- the hurricane's winds could actually push temperatures higher in some locations.</p> <p>Hurricane Kay is forecast to track north, parallel to the Baja California peninsula, through Friday. It will then turn westward away from the coast just shy of the US border with Mexico, but not before making the closest pass to Southern California for a hurricane since 1997's Hurricane Nora.</p> <p>Kay is expected to remain at hurricane strength until it's around 250 miles from San Diego, something only four other storms have done since 1950, according to the National Weather Service, before weakening as it moves closer.</p> <p>But the storm doesn't need to be strong "for this to be a major concern for Southern California," said Brandt Maxwell, a San Diego NWS meteorologist.</p> <p>Forecasters warn the system could amplify the region's extreme heat woes, rather than relieve them.</p> <p>Winds could gust more than 60 miles per hour as the system interacts with the mountainous terrain of Southern California. And those winds will be coming from the east, which means they will have a warming effect on coastal cities. As air travels down mountains, it is compressed and its temperature rises.</p>

	<p>It will be similar to the Santa Ana wind phenomenon, which typically occurs in the fall and winter.</p> <p>"We are not calling it Santa Ana winds, but they will have characteristics of them as they pass through canyons and the sloped terrain," Maxwell told CNN.</p> <p>The warm, dry winds from the east will increase the region's fire risk. Temperatures could reach 100 degrees in the coastal areas of San Diego and Orange Counties on Friday.</p> <p>"This happened in 1984 as a Category 1 Hurricane Marie well southwest of San Diego County forced temperatures to reach 100 in San Diego," Maxwell said.</p> <p>Overnight lows could remain in the 80s overnight Thursday and into Friday morning, making sleeping uncomfortable, especially for those without air conditioning.</p> <p>Then, the relentless heat will "end abruptly and unusually" late Friday, the Los Angeles NWS said, as the tropical system's cloud cover and rainfall move into the region, drastically reducing temperatures but creating new hazards.</p> <p>Even as the Southwest has been mired in a multi-year megadrought, Kay's rainfall could pose a significant flood threat.</p> <p>"Confidence is rapidly increasing for a significant rainfall event across Southern California, Arizona, and eventually central California and Nevada into Saturday," forecasters at the Weather Prediction Center wrote Wednesday.</p> <p>East-facing slopes near the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto mountain ranges could see the heaviest rainfall, with as much as 4 inches possible through Friday. The WPC has issued a rare level 3 out of 4 outlook for excessive rainfall across this region for Friday.</p> <p>Even though rainfall is desperately needed across parched Southern California, this much rain over a short period of time can cause creeks and rivers to rise rapidly.</p> <p>"It's never a good thing to get too much rain all at once, a trait all too common among slow-moving tropical storms," the WPC said. "Thus, the flash flood potential is summarily also rapidly increasing."</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Tribal Homeland Security Advisory Council
SOURCE	https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/border-security/dhs-establishes-first-ever-tribal-homeland-security-advisory-council/
GIST	<p>Today, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced the establishment of the first-ever Tribal Homeland Security Advisory Council and the opening of the nomination period for membership. This Council will enable Tribal leaders to advise the Secretary on homeland security policies and practices that affect Indian Country and indigenous communities, including emergency management, law enforcement, cybersecurity, domestic terrorism and targeted violence, and border security.</p> <p>"The inaugural Tribal Homeland Security Advisory Council is a result of sustained engagement to improve nation-to-nation relationships and comes at a time of critical importance," said Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas. "I look forward to building a new Council that will provide timely advice and recommendations directly from Indian Country regarding how we can better work together to improve homeland security."</p> <p>The Council will engage with DHS agencies and offices and produce recommendations and reports for the Secretary. The Council will be charged with collaborating on all matters of homeland security as they relate to Tribal Nations and indigenous communities, including but not limited to:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments and the President’s January 26, 2021 Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships; • Implementation of Executive Order 14053, <i>Improving Public Safety and Criminal Justice for Native Americans and Addressing the Crisis of Missing or Murdered Indigenous People</i>; • Implementation of Executive Order 13985, <i>Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government</i>; • Implementation of Executive Order 12898, <i>Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations</i> and Executive Order 13990, <i>Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis</i>; • Implementation and execution of the DHS’s Tribal Consultation Policy; and • The responsibility to uphold the Federal Government’s and the Department’s trust and treaty responsibility to Tribal Nations. <p>The Council’s membership will be diverse in its leadership, professional backgrounds, technical expertise, and geographic makeup. Since every tribe is a unique sovereign nation, DHS strives to establish a Council that is reflective of the wide expanse of Indian country.</p> <p>With today’s announcement, DHS will begin accepting nominations for a period of 30 days. Individuals will be considered for membership based on their qualifications to serve as representatives of a Tribal Nation or tribal organization.</p> <p>Interested individuals may submit their nomination packages via first class mail (Attn: Colleen Silva, Office of Partnership and Engagement, MS 0385, Department of Homeland Security, 2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE, Washington, DC 20528-0835) or e-mail submissions to TribalHSAC@hq.dhs.gov until 11:59 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time, on October 10, 2022.</p>
Return to Top	To learn more about the Council and how to apply, please visit https://www.dhs.gov/tribal-advisory-council .

HEADLINE	09/07 Fed sees ‘generally weak’ future
SOURCE	https://www.usnews.com/news/economy/articles/2022-09-07/economy-faces-generally-weak-future-feds-beige-book-says
GIST	<p>The U.S. economy was balanced between “slight to modest” growth and softening in early July but is headed for “a generally weak” six to 12 months, according to the latest release of the Federal Reserve’s ‘beige book’ on Wednesday.</p> <p>The survey of the Fed’s 12 districts shows five said their economies were growing slightly and five others saying they were seeing a modest softening.</p> <p>“The outlook for future economic growth remained generally weak, with contacts noting expectations for further softening of demand over the next six to twelve months,” the survey concluded.</p> <p>Critically, nine districts reported some moderation in inflation, with lower energy and commodity prices. However, “substantial price increases were reported across all Districts, particularly for food, rent, utilities, and hospitality services.”</p> <p>That outlook is in line with many recent economic data points that show an economy that is slowing, but still growing at a modest pace. Last Friday’s monthly jobs report showed 315,000 new jobs created in August, a little better than expected but down from July’s bumper 526,000. Weekly claims for unemployment benefits have trended upward since the spring.</p> <p>As for inflation, purchasing managers report some lessening of price increases and opening up of supply chains, but the Fed will be watching next week’s consumer price index report for more current evidence that its attempt to curb inflation is working.</p>

	<p>That suggests, as of now, the Fed will likely raise interest rates again when it meets later this month, with experts forecasting another 75 basis point hike. That realization, and some recent comments from Fed governors, powered a relief rally on Wall Street with the Dow Jones Industrial Average up more than 400 points. Falling oil prices and a pullback on bond yields were behind the move upward.</p> <p>“Right now the Fed is fighting for its credibility,” Columbia Threadneedle Investments Portfolio Manager Alex Christensen and vice president, Fixed income Client Portfolio Management Katy Nuss, write in the firm’s latest insights on Wednesday. “And for officials, the cost of doing too little – allowing inflation to become entrenched – outweighs the cost of doing too much.”</p> <p>“Fed Chair Jerome Powell has signaled that he will risk sacrificing employment and potentially over-tightening policy to break inflation,” the pair wrote. “Therefore there must be overwhelming evidence of success before the Fed brings the tightening cycle to an end. With data currently raising more questions than it answers, the Fed is under pressure to deliver more tightening.”</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Ukraine: threat of limited nuclear war
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/09/07/ukraine-russia-nuclear-attacks-crimea/
GIST	<p>Ukraine’s top military chief warned Wednesday that a “limited” nuclear war between Russia and the West cannot be discounted, a scenario with grave global implications.</p> <p>“There is a direct threat of the use, under certain circumstances, of tactical nuclear weapons by the Russian Armed forces,” commander in chief Valeriy Zaluzhnyi wrote in an article published by Ukrinform, a state-run media outlet. “It is also impossible to completely rule out the possibility of the direct involvement of the world’s leading countries in a ‘limited’ nuclear conflict, in which the prospect of World War III is already directly visible.”</p> <p>Zaluzhnyi also acknowledged for the first time that Kyiv was behind strikes deep inside the Russian-occupied Crimea Peninsula in August. The air bases and ammunition depot that were hit were in areas previously thought to be out of range for Ukraine — but were part of its strategy to shift “the Russian Army’s center of gravity,” Zaluzhnyi wrote.</p> <p>With the fighting all but certain to continue into 2023, Ukraine has to make the war “even sharper and more tangible for the Russians and for other occupied regions, despite the massive distance to the targets,” Zaluzhnyi wrote.</p> <p>He called the Crimean strikes a “convincing example” of Kyiv’s calls for allies to send longer-range weapons for its outgunned soldiers. Moscow, he said, can hit 20 times farther.</p> <p>The military chief’s assessment comes as Ukraine’s armed forces claim to be recapturing small areas in counteroffensives in the country’s south and east — fighting that is taking a steep toll on Ukrainian soldiers, who are facing heavy losses against Russia’s more advanced weapons and technologies.</p> <p>Zaluzhnyi’s warning follows weeks of international alarm over a potential disaster at Europe’s largest nuclear facility, the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in southeastern Ukraine. Russian authorities control the plant, with more than 1,000 Ukrainian workers trying to keep it running and hooked up to their country’s power grid despite frequent shelling.</p> <p>The U.N. atomic watchdog agency on Tuesday called for a safe zone there to prevent a nuclear catastrophe. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said he supported the idea if it meant Russian troops would leave. Both sides have accused the other of firing rockets and heavy artillery around the plant.</p> <p>Zaluzhnyi said Russia’s use of the plant as a military base showed its disregard for global nuclear safeguards “even in a conventional war.”</p>

Ukraine's bid to join the European Union and NATO [in part sparked Russia's invasion](#) on Feb. 24. But Washington and its European allies have categorically rejected providing Ukraine any military support that could draw it into a direct confrontation with Russia.

After failing to seize the capital in the war's initial weeks, Russia has focused on taking Ukrainian territory connecting east to south — from the Donbas region, where Russian-backed separatists have been fighting since 2014, to the southern Crimean peninsula, which Moscow illegally annexed the same year.

Ukraine recently launched its counteroffensives aimed at retaking Kherson, a strategic southern port city, and Russian-occupied areas along the border in the northeast Kharkiv region.

Though [much of central and western Ukraine remains largely unscathed](#), Russian cruise missiles are still a threat and could strike across the country with "impunity," Zaluzhnyi wrote. "As long as the current situation persists, this war can last for years."

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HEADLINE	09/08 Where did the Covid aid money go?
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/interactive/2022/covid-money-trail-investigation-explained/?itid=hp_latest-headlines
GIST	<p>It was the largest burst of emergency spending in U.S. history: two years, six laws and more than \$5 trillion intended to break the deadly grip of the coronavirus pandemic. The money spared the U.S. economy from ruin and put vaccines into millions of arms, but it also invited unprecedented levels of fraud, abuse and opportunism.</p> <p>In a year-long investigation, The Washington Post is following the covid money trail to figure out what happened to all that cash. Here are our key findings.</p> <p>Lots of cash, little oversight</p> <p>Washington cannot fully track this historic distribution of federal aid. It's clear that billions were misspent or stolen, but officials aren't sure exactly how much. Even where wrongdoing is apparent, experts say the cash may never be recovered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Immense fraud' creates immense task for Washington as it tries to tighten scrutiny of trillions in emergency coronavirus spending. Read more <p>Haste made waste</p> <p>With the economy in free fall, lawmakers and many agencies opted for haste over precision, opening the door for waste, fraud and abuse. For example, the Small Business Administration rescued hundreds of thousands of firms from collapse, but it also sent billions of dollars to firms that probably shouldn't have obtained the money.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SBA approved loans with signs of fraud early in pandemic, House report says. Read more• Live Nation subsidiaries got millions in aid meant for independent venues. Read more <p>Few rules, pet projects</p> <p>Congress at one point sent about \$500 billion directly to cities, counties and states to shore up their budgets. But the money often came with few rules. Republican officials, in particular, found ways to channel the funds to pet projects with no relation to the pandemic, including cutting taxes and building border walls.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Republican states are trying to use federal covid aid to cut taxes. Read more• Federal watchdog opens 'review' of Tex. use of covid aid on border crackdown. Read more• How federal pandemic aid helped Texas pay for its border crackdown. Read more• Vaccine bonuses, aid to businesses and . . . a golf course? Cities and states put \$350 billion stimulus windfall to widely varied use. Read more <p>A bonanza for criminals</p>

	<p>The vast sums of cash that spared some families from financial ruin also attracted sophisticated criminal networks. For example, criminals stole the identities of thousands of innocent Americans and obtained unemployment checks in their names — making the funds hard to access when people legitimately needed help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘A magnet for rip-off artists’: Fraud siphoned billions from pandemic unemployment benefits. Read more <p>Washington floundered</p> <p>Understaffed, unprepared and overwhelmed federal agencies often fumbled to effectively disburse the massive amounts of cash. At the Department of Veterans Affairs, where watchdogs have warned for years of mismanagement, a nearly \$400 million job-training program has so far produced fewer than 400 jobs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Millions in covid aid went to retrain veterans. Only 397 have landed jobs. Read more <p>The rich got theirs</p> <p>Some aid programs exacerbated economic disparities. Those with the deepest pockets, savviest lawyers and best connections often proved adept at accessing the money, while some of the hardest-hit schools, hospitals, businesses and families were shortchanged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How federal covid aid trickled down to Xavier’s classroom. Read more • The unintended consequences of the \$178 billion bailout to keep hospitals and doctors afloat. Read more
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HEADLINE	09/08 Ukraine war impact on ordinary Russians
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/09/08/putin-russia-polls-sanctions/
GIST	<p>How has the war in Ukraine impacted ordinary Russians? If you listen to some, not much.</p> <p>On Wednesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin publicly dismissed any impact from Western actions against on his country. “I’m sure we have not lost anything and will not lose anything,” Putin said at a plenary session of the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok in Russia’s Far East. “The main thing is strengthening our sovereignty, and this is the inevitable result of what is happening now.”</p> <p>There are immense sanctions and other restrictions. But in Moscow, some argue they are little felt. “Nothing has really changed,” 44-year-old Nataliya Nikonova told a reporter from the New York Times during a recent military parade in Red Square. “Sure, the prices went up, but we can endure that.”</p> <p>“A few stores closed because of sanctions, which is frustrating but not that bad,” 18-year-old Yulia told the Times’ reporter, pointing to a nearby store once known for its luxury goods.</p> <p>Some shoppers have even found ways around the sanctions by visiting a Moscow-aligned neighbor, Belarus, which has fewer restrictions. “Brands like H&M, Bershka and Pull & Bear left Russia but we [who travel to Belarus] can dress in them from head to toe,” Yelena Shitikova, an executive at Arkhangelsk region agency Family Travel, told the Moscow Times.</p> <p>It appears that even rich and powerful Russian businesspeople have grown to accept the circumstances. “Many of the oligarchs who once enjoyed spending time in the west are now resigned to returning to Russia,” the Financial Times wrote after speaking to seven sanctioned Russian tycoons. “Those in Moscow have quietly accepted their diminished status in a country at war.”</p> <p>To critics of the Russian government’s move to invade Ukraine on Feb. 24, the happy sights on the streets of Moscow may be alarming. There is little obvious evidence that sanctions are grinding down Russian resolve, especially as Western countries face their own domestic difficulties with rising energy prices.</p> <p>But Russian attitudes to the war in Ukraine are hardly unwavering. This is a country of 144 million, spread across 6.6 million square miles and 11 time zones, with a population as far apart as St. Petersburg oligarchs to the indigenous villagers of the Far East. It has diversity of everything, including opinion.</p>

Polling released Wednesday by [the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#) shows that “public support for the war against Ukraine, while sky-high, is less solid than statistics generally suggest ... and has fallen in recent months with some supporters saying they are ambivalent, anxious, shocked or fearful about the ongoing military campaign,” The Post’s Robyn Dixon explained Wednesday.

In an analysis released with the polling data, Andrei Kolesnikov of Carnegie, and Denis Volkov, director of Moscow-based independent pollster the Levada Center, [wrote that the idea that Putin](#) has the full support of Russian society was “simply incorrect” and the “conflict has exacerbated existing divisions on a diverse array of issues, including support for the regime.”

To be sure, the levels of support for the war found in the polling suggest the clear majority say they support it: About 75 percent of Russians said they definitely or mostly support the actions of Russia’s military in Ukraine, and 20 percent were found not to support them. Even these high numbers are a fall from March, when 81 percent supported the war and 14 percent opposed it.

But reliable polling is also difficult in a managed autocracy like Russia, where dissent can be risky and the media environment is carefully crafted to restrict debate. Levada, which conducted the polling on behalf of Carnegie, has faced [years of restrictions from](#) the Russian government.

And experts who study seemingly popular autocrats like Putin often find that such popularity can evaporate quickly when the facade slips. “Such staged perceptions of popularity can be fragile,” a team of researchers wrote [for The Post this April](#). “When unanimity or social consensus breaks down, regime support can [dissolve very quickly](#), as happened when the Soviet Union abruptly crumbled in 1989.”

For now, the relative normality on the streets of Moscow may be a good thing. Early in the conflict, [economists told Today’s WorldView](#) that they were concerned about the spillover effects of the financial pain inflicted on Russia, especially if they hit ordinary Russians who have little power to sway Putin.

“Ninety-nine percent of the Russian people have no influence on Kremlin policy. I’m not keen on making life more miserable for ordinary Russians, which these sanctions will do,” Gary Hufbauer of the Peterson Institute for International Economics [said in March](#).

After six months of conflict, it seems clear that Putin does not listen to other Russians when it comes to his policy: He has leverage over the oligarchs, not the other way around. “To do a palace coup and overthrow the tsar, you need to be in the palace first. None of these people are there,” one sanctioned Russian businessman [told the Financial Times](#).

But even if Russians are materially okay, fissures can exist under the surface. “You cannot at the same time argue that majority of Russians fully support war in Ukraine and then point to the fact that Russian army struggles to get people to sign up for war,” Russian political analyst Anton Barbashin wrote Wednesday on [Twitter](#). “Fully supporting and not openly objecting are different things,” Barbashin, one of the many Russians critical of Putin who has fled the country, continued.

Clearly, there have been many acts of defiance from Russians critical of the war, from [paratroopers](#) to [artists](#). But there have been subtler signs of malaise too: The Moscow Times reported this week of a striking rise in interest in esoteric practices like [tarot cards and numerology as Russians struggle](#) to understand their chaotic situation. Putin’s refusal to [fully mobilize for war](#), despite the obvious setbacks Russia has seen in Ukraine, suggests he is concerned about a deeper disquiet, too.

And that struggle is far from over: With a bloody new Ukrainian counteroffensive, the impact of the war will continue to hurt Russians in ways both material and intangible.

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SOURCE	https://crosscut.com/politics/2022/09/four-years-later-voter-approved-wa-gun-law-hasnt-been-implemented
GIST	<p>In 2018, Washington voters passed a sweeping law to increase firearms regulations in a bid to reduce gun violence. Initiative 1639 created a statute to spur secure gun storage, raised the purchase age of semiautomatic rifles to 21 and required enhanced background checks for the people buying those weapons.</p> <p>Another provision tucked into the ballot measure got less notice: It directed state officials to determine how to conduct annual background checks on current owners of pistols and semiautomatic rifles to make sure they're still legally allowed to possess them.</p> <p>It was a novel idea to strengthen the legal framework tasked with keeping guns from people barred from having them under the law, like domestic abusers, those convicted of a felony, and individuals who have been civilly committed after mental-health episodes.</p> <p>But nearly four years after Washington voters approved I-1639, state officials haven't implemented annual checks of pistol and semiautomatic rifle owners – and they have no concrete plans to do so.</p> <p>Even as some Democratic lawmakers and state officials – including Attorney General Bob Ferguson – renew a push to ban the purchase of semiautomatic rifles, the annual background checks approved by voters have been left to languish.</p> <p>Officials cite a host of barriers to the new law, like the cost of administering it and – more significantly – logistical barriers like the absence of a registry or database that tracks firearms owners. Officials note they wouldn't be able access a key background-check database maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation that is used whenever individuals purchase a firearm.</p> <p>In July 2020, the Department of Licensing – which was tasked with developing a “cost-effective and efficient process” to conduct annual checks – concluded that such a program was not feasible under the current system. In an email last week, the office of Gov. Jay Inslee said the Legislature would likely need to weigh in on annual checks on gun owners.</p> <p>“There is a rationale for being able to determine if a person is disqualified from possessing a firearm after purchase. It's important,” wrote Inslee spokesperson Mike Faulk in an email. “The issue is that there is not a way to legally conduct the check under our current system.”</p> <p>“The governor would welcome the opportunity to work with the Legislature to identify a viable path forward to conduct these checks,” Faulk added.</p> <p>Those conclusions that a yearly background check system may not be possible have been made so quietly that key advocates of firearms regulations weren't aware the law was anything more than delayed. Asked whether he expected annual checks to move forward after Washington's new centralized background-check system comes online in 2024, Rep. Drew Hansen said he did.</p> <p>“That gets fixed, I'm nearly positive, with the statewide centralized system,” said Hansen, D-Bainbridge Island and author of the bill creating that new system.</p> <p>Paul Kramer, the citizen sponsor of I-1639, said he was “surprised and somewhat disappointed” that annual checks have not been put in place. He wasn't aware of the failure to implement them, Kramer said, until Crosscut reached out.</p> <p>“I don't think that's an unreasonable thing for us, collectively, to be doing,” said Kramer, whose son was injured in the 2016 shooting at a Mukilteo house party that helped spur I-1639. “I think it moves us toward a safer society, a safer public in general.”</p> <p>‘Millions of records’</p> <p>Americans buy a lot of guns, and Washington is no exception. Between January and August, nearly 507,000 background checks were conducted in the state, according to FBI data.</p>

Washington's current background-check system is fairly unique among the states. The checks are handled by the federal government or by more than 200 local law enforcement jurisdictions, depending on what weapon you want to buy.

It's a system that can create confusion for firearms dealers and tax the resources of tiny police departments and county sheriffs. State reports have also [described this decentralized system as "fragmented,"](#) with some gun [buyers getting less rigorous checks than others](#), depending on the resources, training and access to databases in various jurisdictions conducting the checks.

When someone goes to buy a shotgun or non-semiautomatic rifle – like one operated with a bolt or lever – a licensed firearms dealer contacts the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Checks System database, aka NICS, to conduct a check. Often the results come through within minutes.

People buying pistols go through a more rigorous process, which generally includes a 10-day waiting period before they can receive the gun. During that period, local law enforcement in the places where potential buyers live are tasked with contacting the FBI database. They then conduct additional checks through Washington state databases, like the state Health Care Authority and the Washington State Patrol, and potentially local court records.

Part of I-1639 moved background checks of semiautomatic rifles to the tighter process conducted for pistols, including a waiting period of 10 business days to receive the firearm. That part of the ballot measure took effect July 1, 2019, generating a slew of additional background checks for local law enforcement to conduct.

That was one big reason lawmakers in 2020 [passed Hansen's bill to redesign Washington's background checks](#) by consolidating them within a new unit at the Washington State Patrol. That unit will include dozens of staffers to conduct the checks by contacting the FBI database and state records and will have a portal for firearms dealers to contact the State Patrol with the background-check requests.

"It's going to be the single biggest change to strengthen background checks since the state passed background checks in the first place," said Hansen.

But it still won't include the annual re-checks laid out in I-1639 for owners of pistols and semiautomatic rifles.

The initiative stated that, "Within twelve months of the effective date of this section, the department of licensing shall ... develop a cost-effective and efficient process" to verify that owners of pistols and semiautomatic rifles are still legally allowed to possess them.

If someone is flagged during such a check, [according to the initiative](#), then the state is tasked with notifying local law enforcement wherever the person lives. From there, law enforcement would "take steps to ensure such persons are not illegally in possession of firearms." This would apply, for example, to someone who bought a firearm before they had a domestic violence or civil protection order.

"The recheck will flag the fact that individuals, even if they haven't tried to buy a firearm," might be ineligible to possess it, said Renée Hopkins, CEO of the Alliance for Gun Responsibility, the advocacy organization that spearheaded the I-1639 campaign.

That could be especially important to prevent harm in situations where domestic violence is involved, said Hopkins.

In July 2020 – [the date by which the new checks should have been developed](#) – the state Department of Licensing instead concluded that there was no "cost effective and efficient" way to handle annual rechecks. It recommended reevaluating when Washington's new, centralized gun-purchase background system comes online in 2024, [according to a copy of its recommendations to the Legislature](#).

One big logistical reason is because background checks are centered around the purchase of a gun using the applications filled out when buying a firearm. The Department of Licensing keeps some of that information from those applications on file, but neither Washington state nor the federal government keeps actual records on who owns guns.

“If an individual moves out of state, if they pass away, if they no longer have a firearm, we don't know that, right?” said Beau Perschbacher, legislative and policy director for the department. “And so thinking about a re-check, you're potentially doing a re-check on someone that doesn't live here or that's not alive.”

“You're talking about millions of records that local law enforcement would have to search, and the cost of that was a major consideration,” he added.

In his email, Faulk, the Inslee spokesperson, also pointed to the challenges of conducting checks only through state databases – and without the FBI's national criminal database.

“The biggest concern is that if we don't have a complete check, we could be allowing a person to continue possessing a firearm when they are not legally allowed to do so because of a disqualifier that was not in our state system,” he wrote.

The FBI's national press office didn't respond to requests for comment.

The Alliance for Gun Responsibility expects the state to follow the statute and find a way to implement the annual checks, Hopkins wrote in an email.

“It is not acceptable to wait until after the rollout to evaluate the re-check program,” she said. “It must be part of the system upon rollout.”

What's next

In July 2021, the advisory board overseeing the new background-check system agreed with the recommendation to re-evaluate annual checks for pistol and semiautomatic rifle owners after that system goes live in 2024, according to [meeting minutes obtained from the Washington State Patrol](#).

One possibility to make the annual checks logistically feasible was recommended in a different state report on firearms that was released in 2019.

That Office of Financial Management report floated the idea of creating an “endorsement” system that would require people to get background checks before they purchased a weapon, similar to a process currently conducted in Washington for those who apply for concealed pistol licenses. The state maintains a database of people with concealed pistol licenses, and can check that database to revoke licenses if prohibiting records pop up, according to the report.

“If this system is developed to the point that all relevant state data reaches it in a timely manner, any individual with a clear firearm endorsement can be assumed to pass any state-level check,” [according to the report](#). “Conversely, any new information that would cause a person to fail a state check would preempt the check entirely by causing a hold to be placed on their gun endorsement.”

It remains to be seen whether there's any political appetite to implement the law. In the wake of mass shootings this year in Uvalde, Texas, and Buffalo, New York, talk has bubbled up again about passing a law to ban the sale of semi-automatic rifles in Washington. That's a progressive priority previously supported [by Inslee and Attorney General Bob Ferguson](#) that has never advanced in the Legislature.

Faulk, the Inslee spokesperson, said it would be up to state lawmakers to decide whether they wanted to proceed with annual checks that didn't depend on the FBI national criminal database.

“The Legislature could decide that a more limited search is sufficient, so that there could be a check of only state records,” he wrote, adding: “This is very speculative though, because we don’t have an indication from the Legislature that they would find this partial check satisfactory.”

A spokesperson for Ferguson, [who took the unusual step of endorsing I-1639 during the campaign](#), said the office couldn’t provide much comment.

In an email, spokesperson Brionna Aho pointed out that the annual re-checks law wasn’t a proposal previously supported by Ferguson, unlike other parts of I-1639, such as the higher purchase age, enhanced background checks and mandatory waiting period for semiautomatic rifles.

Aho referred questions – like whether Ferguson believed the annual rechecks law should be repealed, or if additional efforts should be made to implement it – to the Department of Licensing, the State Patrol and the Legislature.

“As you know, we provide legal counsel to those agencies, which limits what we can share regarding their work if they have sought legal counsel on these matters,” Aho wrote. Another spokesperson for Ferguson, citing attorney-client privilege, wouldn’t confirm whether Ferguson’s office had been consulted.

The Washington Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs agreed with the recommendation to hold off on annual rechecks for now, according to a statement from executive director Steve Strachan.

“Once the state’s single point background check system is operational, one of the challenges may no longer exist, though it would be incumbent on [the Washington State Patrol] to determine whether such a process would be conceivable,” Strachan, who is on the background-checks advisory board, said in the statement.

If the Inslee administration wanted to resume conversations on the annual recheck law, Strachan said his organization “would look forward to being an active and productive partner in those discussions.”

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HEADLINE	09/07 Drought, war impact global food supply
SOURCE	https://www.wired.com/story/how-drought-and-war-are-really-affecting-the-global-food-supply/
GIST	<p>THE IMAGES ARE apocalyptic. Pleasure boats marooned in dried-up European rivers. Norwegian reservoirs too low to drive hydropower. China’s largest inland lake turned to a prairie as its water evaporates away.</p> <p>And so are the warnings. The National Drought Group of the UK predicts that yields of some vegetable crops—carrots, onion, and potatoes—could be cut in half. The European Drought Observatory says that almost half of the bloc is drier than it has been since the Renaissance. China’s agricultural ministry has urged farmers to undertake emergency switches to different crops following a historic heatwave.</p> <p>With fall harvests coming, it’s natural to be concerned about global food supplies. But people who track the production and trade of major crops say the world is not in an emergency—yet. Pick any location, and you may find signs of strain. But overall, the system still shows resilience. “It’s easy to lose track of the scale of global agriculture,” says Scott Irwin, a widely followed economist and chair of agricultural marketing at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. “It’s just massive, and it’s extremely distributed geographically. If you have a problem in one area, at least historically, that will tend to get offset by better than average growing conditions someplace else.”</p> <p>“The fact is,” he adds, “as of today, the world has adequate supplies of grain.”</p> <p>That might seem counterintuitive, given soaring food prices and the lingering disruption of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, where cargo ships that were trapped since February have finally been allowed to depart. But it captures the disconnect between how people experience food supplies</p>

locally, as irrigation water is directed [away from perishable vegetables](#) and favorite condiments [disappear from shelves](#), and how economists judge the health of a system founded on staple crops such as wheat, corn, and soybeans that can be shipped and stored.

The [most recent monthly assessment](#), published in mid-August by the US Department of Agriculture, projects higher US and global production for wheat and soybeans and mixed results for corn and rice. Because those predictions are aggregates, they smooth out what producers are feeling locally—better weather in some areas, reduced yields in others—and also the reality that certain commodity crops are planted and harvested at different times of the year. Winter wheat, which is taken up in May or June, was already cut by the time summer heat waves arrived, but hot, dry conditions could have interfered with the pollination of corn, which goes into the ground in the spring.

“A couple of days ago, there were headlines saying South Dakota’s corn crop was unusually low this year—and they have a terrible drought—and that Nebraska was a little below normal,” says Daniel Sumner, an economist and director of the Agricultural Issues Center at the University of California, Davis. “But as of the middle of August, USDA was still projecting a normal national corn and soybean crop in the United States. And that’s because Indiana and Illinois and Iowa had relatively good crops, and are much more important in the national total, than Nebraska or South Dakota would be.”

Even if those differences average out nationally—possibly even globally, when you balance Southern Hemisphere production against the US and Western Europe, or the Americas against Central Europe and Asia—there’s a persistent sense that things are, well, wiggly. Some of the changes in productivity come from farmers’ decisions, like choosing to plant more in order to make up for a dry year, or less to mitigate the fertilizer price hikes created by Russia withholding exports. But some are unquestionably due to unpredictable weather patterns generated by climate change, which are affecting farmers’ routines as well as harming crops already in the fields.

“We’re seeing longer periods of dryness before the next rain event occurs, and that next rain event is more likely to be in the form of heavy rainfall that will end up running off” because the [soil has hardened](#), says Beth Hall, director of the Indiana State Climate Office at Purdue University. “The success of crops this year in the US, in the broader Midwest region, was all about when farmers were able to plant their fields. Those that were planted earlier had roots deep enough that when it was dry, they could tap into some low moisture.” But if fields were muddy from rain and farmers couldn’t get into them, she adds, they planted later—and root systems were shorter and unable to keep new plants heavy before the next downpour came around.

Of course, farmers have always fretted about the weather. The challenge for crop experts right now is determining whether droughts and other disturbances—and the crop shortfalls they may cause—add up to a predictable trend. That’s especially important because, while productivity might not look bad overall, there isn’t much [surplus grain stock](#) thanks to scattered droughts last year and the supply shock of Ukraine’s breadbasket being temporarily locked out of the global food system.

“The key thing about stocks is that, if you have a drought, you can use them to keep prices reasonable—because when they get very low, prices get volatile,” says Joseph Glauber, a senior research fellow at the nonprofit International Food Policy Research Institute and former chief economist at the USDA. “I think people were hoping that stock levels would be rebuilt, essentially that we’d have really large crops this year. But there are these drought and weather disruptions around the world, though all the shoes haven’t fallen yet.”

No one who works in crop economics has forgotten that high grain prices more than a decade ago were the spark of civil unrest around the world: riots in Haiti, South America, and South Asia in 2008 and 2009, and the Arab Spring in 2010. And no one thinks things are that bad, yet. “It’s very easy to underestimate how flexible production can be,” Sumner says. “The current droughts don’t yet look nearly as severe as we’ve seen at least a half a dozen times in my career.”

	<p>And future shortages are likely to be unevenly distributed. In some parts of the world, droughts have already lasted long enough to profoundly disrupt food production. The people bearing the brunt of that disruption lack the income or power that could help alleviate their suffering. Historically, the Horn of Africa—Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya—experiences rainy seasons twice a year, from October to December and again from March to May, and the precipitation is crucial for feeding both humans and livestock. The four most recent rainy seasons all failed. The latest one, which should have ended last May, was the driest on record. A third of the area’s livestock have died. The Famine Early Warning Systems Network, a project of the US Agency for International Development plus international nonprofits, estimates that as many as 20 million people are hungry.</p> <p>In the past, governments in other parts of the world sent food aid. This year, thanks to droughts and supply shocks, that response isn’t arriving at the usual volume or speed. Wheat from Ukraine, for instance, would have been an aid staple, but the first shipment from there arrived only on August 30. “In normal cases, we can move food from one region to another to make up for losses; the international community, the UN World Food Programme, is able to move food into crisis situations,” says Christine Stewart, director of the Institute for Global Nutrition at the University of California, Davis. “The problem is that right now we have so many overlapping crises that the backup system is under an immense amount of stress.”</p> <p>The Horn of Africa is an extreme case, but it may also be a glimpse of the future. The global food system exists to allow surpluses to be traded to areas where crops are short. It works, for now. But as weather becomes less predictable and droughts more common, production may become less reliable—and the movement of food to the most vulnerable might grind to a halt.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Aging infrastructure under climate change
SOURCE	https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20220907-intense-heat-waves-and-flooding-are-battering-electricity-and-water-systems-as-america-s-aging-infrastructure-sags-un
GIST	<p>The 1960s and 1970s were a golden age of infrastructure development in the U.S., with the expansion of the interstate system and widespread construction of new water treatment, wastewater and flood control systems reflecting national priorities in public health and national defense. But infrastructure requires maintenance, and, eventually, it has to be replaced.</p> <p>That hasn’t been happening in many parts of the country. Increasingly, extreme heat and storms are putting roads, bridges, water systems and other infrastructure under stress.</p> <p>Two recent examples – an intense heat wave that pushed California’s power grid to its limits in September 2022, and the failure of the water system in Jackson, Mississippi, amid flooding in August – show how a growing maintenance backlog and increasing climate change are turning the 2020s and 2030s into a golden age of infrastructure failure.</p> <p>I am a civil engineer whose work focuses on the impacts of climate change on infrastructure. Often, low-income communities and communities of color like Jackson see the least investment in infrastructure replacements and repairs.</p> <p>Crumbling Bridge and Water Systems</p> <p>The United States is consistently falling short on funding infrastructure maintenance. A report by former Federal Reserve Board Chairman Paul Volcker’s Volcker Alliance in 2019 estimated the U.S. has a US\$1 trillion backlog of needed repairs.</p> <p>Over 220,000 bridges across the country – about 33% of the total – require rehabilitation or replacement.</p> <p>A water main break now occurs somewhere in the U.S. every two minutes, and an estimated 6 million gallons of treated water are lost each day. This is happening at the same time the western United States is implementing water restrictions amid the driest 20-year span in 1,200 years. Similarly, drinking water distribution in the United States relies on over 2 million miles of pipes that have limited life spans.</p>

The underlying issue for infrastructure failure is age, resulting in the failure of critical parts such as pumps and motors.

Aging systems have been blamed for failures of the water system in Jackson, [wastewater treatment plants in Baltimore](#) that leaked dangerous amounts of sewage into the Chesapeake Bay and [dam failures in Michigan](#) that have resulted in widespread damage and evacuations.

Inequality in Investment

Compounding the problem of age is the lack of funds to modernize critical systems and perform essential maintenance. Fixing that will require systemic change.

Infrastructure is primarily a city and county responsibility financed through local taxes. However, these entities are also [dependent on state and federal funds](#). As populations increase and development expands, local governments have cumulatively had to [double their infrastructure spending](#) since the 1950s, while federal sources remained mostly flat.

Inequity often underlies the growing need for investment in low-income U.S. communities.

Over [2 million people](#) in the United States lack access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. The [greatest predictor of those who lack this access](#) is race: 5.8% of Native American households lack access, while only 0.3% of white households lack access. In terms of sanitation, studies in predominantly African American counties have [found disproportionate impacts](#) from nonworking sewage systems.

Jackson, a majority-Black state capital, has dealt with water system breakdowns for years and has repeatedly [requested infrastructure funding](#) from the state to upgrade its struggling water treatment plants.

Climate Change Exacerbates the Risk

The consequences of inadequate maintenance are compounded by climate change, which is accelerating infrastructure failure with increased flooding, extreme heat and growing storm intensity.

Much of the world's infrastructure was designed for an environment that no longer exists. The historic precipitation levels, temperature profiles, extreme weather events and storm surge levels those systems were designed and built to handle are now exceeded on a regular basis.

Unprecedented rainfall in the California desert in 2015 [tore apart a bridge](#) over Interstate 10, one of the state's most important east-west routes. Temperatures near 120 degrees Fahrenheit (49 C) forced the [Phoenix airport to cancel flights](#) in 2017 out of concern the planes might not be able to safely take off.

A heat wave in the Pacific Northwest in 2020 [buckled roads and melted streetcar cables](#) in Portland. [Amtrak slowed its train](#) speeds in the Northeast in July 2022 out of concern that a heat wave would cause the overhead wires to expand and sag and rails to potentially buckle.

[Power outages](#) during California's September 2022 heat wave are another potentially life-threatening infrastructure problem.

The Rising Costs of Delayed Repairs

My research with colleagues shows that the vulnerability of the national transportation system, energy distribution system, water treatment facilities and coastal infrastructure [will significantly increase over the next decade](#) due to climate change.

We estimate that rail infrastructure faces additional repair costs of \$5 billion to \$10 billion annually by 2050, while road repairs due to temperature increases could reach a cumulative \$200 billion to \$300 billion by the end of the century. Similarly, water utilities are facing the possibility of [a trillion-dollar price tag by 2050](#).

	<p>After studying the issue of climate change impacts on infrastructure for two decades, with climate projections getting worse, not better, I believe addressing the multiple challenges to the nation's infrastructure requires systemic change.</p> <p>Two items are at the top of the list: national prioritization and funding.</p> <p>Prioritizing the infrastructure challenge is essential to bring government responsibilities into the national conversation. Most local jurisdictions simply can't afford to absorb the cost of needed infrastructure. The recent infrastructure bill and the Inflation Reduction Act are starting points, but they still fall short of fixing the long-term issue.</p> <p>Without systemic change, Jackson, Mississippi, will be just the start of an escalating trend.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Covid left 7.9M kids w/out parent, caregiver
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/sep/7/covid-left-nearly-8-million-kids-worldwide-without/
GIST	<p>Nearly eight million children worldwide lost a parent or primary caregiver during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a new study.</p> <p>The study, published by the Journal of the American Medical Association, arrived at that number after reviewing the World Health Organization's excess mortality statistics from Jan. 1, 2020 to May 1, 2022.</p> <p>It is estimated that 7.9 million children lost a parent or primary caregiver during that time frame. When the study includes secondary caregivers such as grandparents or other relatives, that estimate jumps to 10.5 million kids.</p> <p>Areas where orphanhood was most pronounced during the pandemic included Southeast Asia and Africa.</p> <p>"Among the WHO regions most affected, countries with the highest numbers of bereaved children in Southeast Asia included Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, and Nepal and in Africa included Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa," the study's authors wrote.</p> <p>According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, orphanhood increases a child's likelihood of experiencing poverty, abuse, delayed development, mental health challenges, reduced access to education and institutionalization.</p> <p>The study says that the U.S. and Peru are the only countries that have made national commitments to address COVID-related orphanhood.</p> <p>It suggested that the multi-billion dollar U.S. program for children who have been orphaned due to HIV/AIDS-related issues with a parent or caregiver — known officially as President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief — is a good template when approaching how to assist the orphaned children of COVID-19.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/08 Day 197 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/08/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-197-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ukraine has recaptured several settlements in the north-eastern Kharkiv region as part of a surprise counterattack, president Volodymyr Zelenskyy has claimed. "This week we have good news from Kharkiv region," he said in his Wednesday evening address, adding that "now is not the right time to name those settlements where the Ukrainian flag has returned". An official representing the Russian-controlled Donetsk People's Republic said on Tuesday that Ukrainian forces "encircled" Balakliia, an eastern town situated between Kharkiv and Russian-occupied Izium.

- **US intelligence says Ukrainian forces are making “slow but meaningful progress” on the battlefield.** “We’ll see how things pan out,” defence undersecretary Colin Kahl said. “But I certainly think things are going better on the Ukrainian side right now in the south than is true on the Russian side.” The Institute for the Study of War (ISW), a Washington-based thinktank, reported on Wednesday that Ukrainian forces probably captured Verbivka, less than two miles (3.2km) north-west of Balakliia, on Tuesday, citing geo-locatable images posted by Ukrainian soldiers.
- **Shelling resumed near Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant** on Wednesday. Ukrainian officials accused Russian forces of firing on the city of Nikopol, across from the plant, as well as in Enerhodar, where the power plant is located. “Employees of communal and other services simply do not have time to complete emergency and restoration work, as another shelling reduces their work to zero,” the Ukrainian mayor of Enerhodar, Dmytro Orlov, said on Telegram.
- **The UN has accused Moscow of forcing Ukrainians into detention camps and even prisons via a Kremlin-directed “filtration” program**, and removing children from the war zone to hand over to adoptive parents inside Russia. “We are concerned that the Russian authorities have adopted a simplified procedure to grant Russian citizenship to children without parental care, and that these children would be eligible for adoption by Russian families,” Ilze Brands Kehris, assistant UN secretary-general for human rights, told the security council. The US ambassador to the UN, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, told the council that estimates indicate authorities have “interrogated, detained, and forcibly deported” between 900,000 and 1.6 million Ukrainians to Russia since late February in an attempt “to prepare for an attempted annexation”.
- **The body of a British aid worker who was [captured by Russian proxies in April](#) has been handed to Ukraine with “[possible signs of unspeakable torture](#)”**, according to the country’s foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba. Paul Urey, 45, from Warrington, Cheshire, was captured along with another Briton, Dylan Healey. The two men were charged with “mercenary activities” by the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic, but in July the Russian proxy authorities [announced that Urey had died as a result of “illness and stress”](#). Kuleba said Urey’s body had been returned, showing possible signs of torture.
- **Vladimir Putin has [threatened to tear up a fragile Ukraine grain deal](#)** allowing exports from the Black Sea. During a bellicose speech at an economic conference in Vladivostok, Putin said he would speak with the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, about “limiting the destinations for grain exports”, claiming that only two of 87 ships leaving Ukraine with grain had gone to developing countries. Data from the UN showed the claim was false by a factor of at least 10.
- **Putin also threatened to cut off all deliveries of gas, oil, and coal to Europe** if they imposed a price cap on Russian energy imports. “Will there be any political decisions that contradict the contracts? Yes, we just won’t fulfil them. We will not supply anything at all if it contradicts our interests,” he said, according to a Reuters translation of his remarks. “We will not supply gas, oil, coal, heating oil – we will not supply anything.” Recalling a Russian fairytale, he said that Europeans could “freeze like the wolf’s tail”.
- **Putin declared that [Russia](#) had “lost nothing” in launching a war on Ukraine** during a belligerent and defiant speech at the Russian Eastern Economic Forum on Wednesday. “We haven’t lost anything and we won’t lose anything,” he said, when asked about the cost of the invasion. “The main gain is the strengthening of our sovereignty.”

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HEADLINE	09/07 Ukraine surprise counterattack in Kharkiv
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/global/2022/sep/07/ukraine-launches-surprise-counterattack-kharkiv-region-russia
GIST	<p>Ukraine has launched a surprise counterattack in the north-east Kharkiv region, stretching Russian forces who are also facing Ukrainian attacks in the south.</p> <p>An official representing the Russian-controlled Donetsk People’s Republic said on Tuesday that Ukrainian forces “encircled” Balakliia, an eastern town of 27,000 people situated between Kharkiv and Russian-occupied Izium.</p>

“Today, the Ukrainian armed forces, after prolonged artillery preparation ... began an attack on Balakliia,” Daniil Bezsonov said on Telegram.

“At this time, Balakliia is in operative encirclement and within the firing range of Ukrainian artillery. All approaches are cut off by fire,” he said, adding that a successful Ukrainian offensive would threaten Russian forces in Izium, a strategically important town that Russia has been using for its own offensive in eastern Ukraine.

Unverified footage circulating on social media on Wednesday showed what looked like a Ukrainian soldier posing in front of an entrance sign for Balakliia.

Analysts have said that the initial target of the offensive could be the city of Kupyansk, a key road hub for Russian supplies heading south from the border into eastern Ukraine.

Ukraine’s president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, has remained guarded about the military counter-offensive in the east while Ukraine’s army has yet to comment on the alleged new battle plan.

Without giving details, Zelenskiy reported “good news” from the Kharkiv region east of Kyiv, implying some settlements had been recaptured from Russian forces but adding that “now is not the right time to name those settlements where the Ukrainian flag has returned”.

In a Wednesday evening address, Zelenskiy cited “the extremely successful hits in areas where the occupiers are concentrated”, and thanked Ukrainian artillery troops for what he said were successful strikes against Moscow’s forces in the south.

One of Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskiy’s advisers, Oleksiy Arestovych, said on Tuesday night that “lightning-fast changes are taking place” in the Kharkiv region, in parallel to the southern offensive in the Kherson region announced by Ukraine’s military last week.

In Washington, a senior Pentagon official said that Ukrainian forces are making “slow but meaningful progress” on the battlefield.

“We’ll see how things pan out,” said under secretary of defense for policy Colin Kahl. “But I certainly think things are going better on the Ukrainian side right now in the south than is true on the Russian side.”

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW), a Washington-based thinktank, reported on Wednesday that Ukrainian forces probably captured Verbivka (less than 2 miles north-west of Balakliia) on Tuesday, citing geo-locatable images posted by Ukrainian soldiers.

Without specifying any locations, the Luhansk regional governor, Serhiy Haidai, told Ukrainian television on Wednesday that a “counterattack is under way and ... our forces are enjoying some success. Let’s leave it at that”.

Ukraine’s military did give some confirmation of the alleged offensive on Wednesday, claiming Ukraine’s army shot down a Russian military Sukhoi Su-25 aircraft near Volokhiv Yar, a town about 12 miles from Balakliia.

Ukraine for a long time spoke openly of its intent to launch a large-scale southern offensive in the Kherson region, forcing Russia to transfer some of its most elite units from the east to Kherson.

According to the ISW, this has opened up opportunities for Ukraine to launch attacks near Kharkiv. “Russia’s deployment of forces from Kharkiv and eastern Ukraine to Ukraine’s south is likely enabling Ukrainian counterattacks of opportunity,” the thinktank wrote late on Tuesday.

Rob Lee, a military analyst at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, said the Ukrainian attack indicated that Russian forces near Kharkiv were stretched.

“Russia doesn’t have strong reserves in this area that could be sent quickly to plug gaps and reinforce key towns. Ukraine may have a numerical and armour superiority here.”

The Russian government and its defence ministry have not commented on Ukraine’s alleged offensives.

Speaking at an economic forum in the far-eastern Russian city of Vladivostok on Wednesday, the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, said Russia had not lost anything as a result of its military campaign in Ukraine.

A number of prominent pro-Kremlin bloggers volleyed criticism at the Russian authorities after Ukraine’s latest offensive.

Igor Girkin, a Russian ultra-nationalist and former military leader for the Russian-backed republics in eastern Ukraine, said the outskirts of Balakliia were defended by poorly equipped mobilised forces from the Donbas region who “didn’t know how to use available heavy weapons”. He added that Ukraine also took control of the settlement of Volokhiv Yar overnight.

Aleksandr Kots, a pro-Kremlin war blogger, on Wednesday denounced the Russian authorities for hiding “bad news”. “We need to start doing something about the system where our leadership doesn’t like to talk about bad news and their subordinates don’t want to upset their bosses,” he said.

Ukraine’s offensive in Kharkiv came as Andrei Turchak, head of Russia’s ruling party, proposed to hold referendums on joining Russia in occupied territories on 4 November, when Russia celebrates its National Unity day.

“It would be right and symbolic to hold referendums on this very day,” Turchak wrote on his Telegram channel, the most concrete sign yet that Russia is planning to go ahead with annexing Ukrainian territories.

Also on Wednesday, a new report by the London-based Centre for Information Resilience’s Eyes on Russia said it was highly likely that Russian forces shelled the Russian-occupied Enerhodar, the satellite town of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.

The centre’s investigators also verified previously published footage of a rocket firing from next to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant – controlled by Russia – as well as images of Russian equipment at the plant.

After Russian forces took control of Enerhodar and the nuclear plant in March, the two sides have traded blame over the shelling in both areas. Ukraine has said Russia is carrying out false-flag operations to blame Ukrainian forces, while Russia has said the attacks are carried out by Ukraine.

The centre’s investigators geo-located footage showing the impact of shelling in front of a building in Enerhodar. The footage showed a larger quantity of dirt on the left side of the crater, indicating that the shell came from the right side of the camera, stated the report.

The investigators then traced the potential trajectory of the rocket and concluded that it was launched from the southern side of the Dnieper river in Zaporizhzhia region, an area under Russian control since February.

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HEADLINE	09/07 NYC wealth divide linked to heat deaths
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/sep/07/new-york-heat-deaths-map-inequality
GIST	<p>It was a warm July morning in New York City, and at 6am on a Saturday, barely anyone was outside. But huddled in a lush community garden in the Bronx, a dozen volunteers were awake and ready to set out on an important fact-finding mission: are wealthier neighborhoods less burdened by heat?</p> <p>Equipped with heat sensors, this group of citizen scientists were participating in a groundbreaking study: the first ever street level assessment of heat in New York City. The goal was to find differences</p>

in neighborhoods – which communities were relatively cool? Which were sweltering hot? – and map the city’s heat inequality.

Joined by others in upper Manhattan and Harlem, the volunteers scanned temperatures along the streets with sensors attached to their cars and bikes. The results, presented to community members in January, showed a harsh reality of city living: the south Bronx was 8F (4.5C) hotter than the Upper West Side and Upper East Side, some of the city’s [richest neighborhoods](#), just a few miles away.

“The variation in temperature is stark,” said principal investigator Liv Yoon. The data was analyzed by Climate Adaptation Planning and Analytics Strategies and is part of a nationwide heat-mapping initiative by NOAA. “The built environment really matters on how heat manifests and what people feel,” said Yoon.

The [results](#) mirror what residents and researchers have known and brought attention to for years: in cities like New York City, heat is distributed unequally – and people of color and low-income residents shoulder the highest burden of heat. Poor air quality, inadequate access to cooling and air conditioning further exacerbates the likelihood of heatstrokes and deaths from heat exposure. There are approximately [370 heat-related deaths](#) in New York City on average each year, with the Bronx being especially vulnerable.

Heat is especially severe for people with pre-existing conditions such as heart disease, and as higher night-time temperatures prevent people from recuperating overnight, it is also driving a rise in sleep-related mental health problems.

Some residents, who have been living in close proximity to sweltering asphalt and further away from parks and trees, may not be surprised by this. “The thing is, we already knew where the hotter areas were,” said Yoon. “What we wanted to contribute is connecting the dots.”

Environmental advocates say the data, because of how granular it is, can help make the case that certain neighborhoods need better resources and access to green space.

“We have always gotten the brunt of the city’s pollution,” said Melissa Barber, researcher and co-founder of environmental justice group South Bronx Unite.

The difference in temperature between the south Bronx and the Upper West Side reflect a myriad of other environmental inequalities. There are five major highways that run through and around the south Bronx, including the hulking Cross Bronx Expressway, which contributes to the surrounding area’s noise and air pollution. Despite being bounded to the south by the Harlem River, the waterfront in the south Bronx is so developed that residents cannot readily access the blue space. Meanwhile, the Upper West Side sits between Central park and Riverside park, which looks out on to the Hudson River.

Asphalt roads and densely built buildings in cities trap heat. These urban pockets of heat can also overlap with other health disparities: the south Bronx has one of the highest asthma rates in the country. Residents here also live in housing that tends to trap heat, and where the median age of apartment buildings is nearly 90 years.

“These spaces are not only deprived because of the heat they’ve acquired, the existing infrastructure is failing as well,” said Satpal Kaur, an architect who volunteered in the heat-mapping survey.

Higher heat inside and outside a home owes to a combination of factors, including old housing stock, a lack of trees in the south Bronx and Harlem, and building efficiency factors – like a “leaky envelope” which allows outdoor air to infiltrate and indoor air to escape, said Kaur.

“Because they’re not super tight buildings, heat actually rises up, and they just feel more stuffy and humid,” said Kaur in reference to old buildings without central air conditioning.

One of the solutions to mediating this is retrofitting existing structures to be more energy-efficient and installing split-unit air conditioners – which are mounted on a wall and designed to cool larger spaces – instead of window units that aren’t as effective at cooling down the entire surface of the home.

But many low-income residents are not able to afford an air conditioner, which is an increasing necessity with rising temperatures.

“In the Bronx, most people don’t have that economic level to have air conditioners,” said Barber. “And if they do have them they can’t use them because they can’t afford the bill.”

Opening up libraries, schools and community spaces with air conditioning as cooling centers is part of a heat management strategy in many cities. But in the week-long heatwave that hit New York City in July, half of all cooling centers were shut on Saturdays, and 83% were closed on Sundays - despite the heat emergency lasting through the weekend.

“I wanted to see how we can do something about this detrimental heat here in the Bronx,” said Octavia Jones, a program coordinator at a local ministry. Her 15-year-old daughter joined her on the heat-mapping expedition and helped her navigate as they drove through the city. Jones lives right off the Cross Bronx Expressway and her eight-year-old son has asthma.

Jones lives in Mott Haven, a mixed residential and industrial area close to the waterfront in south Bronx. The poverty rate in Mott Haven was nearly 40% in 2019, compared with 16% citywide and 26% in the Bronx overall. It is surrounded by elevated highways, and a fleet of trucks passing in and out of the 500,000 sq ft (46,451 sq metres) headquarters and distribution hub of FreshDirect, a grocery delivery service that opened in 2018 and was met with opposition from locals.

“We live in the traffic of it all and we try to stay inside on those very hot days,” Jones said, adding that in avoiding the outside, she relies on her window air conditioning unit. “They are effective and they are necessary,” Jones said. Her electric bill in the summer does go up by an average of \$150.

Residents of the south Bronx peninsula don’t have access to the water due to the commercial developments, warehouses and other industrial buildings concentrated along the waterfront. This lack of access to green and blue spaces becomes an even bigger problem in the summer when people seek to cool off from the heat.

Planting more trees can help mitigate hotter temperatures, and South Bronx Unite has recently used this data to advocate for more green space at a roundtable for extreme heat preparation. But activists urge local and federal officials to address the structural inequities, and one such move is capping the Cross Bronx Expressway, covering portions of the highway with green space and reconnecting neighborhoods separated by the structure. Barber hopes that the heat-mapping findings will bring about concrete action that for so long, has not been invested into the south Bronx.

“Because we as a community have had to face so much neglect and rejection by elected officials, we had to come together and fight for the things that we feel are necessary,” Barber said. “Data will be the backing.”

In the more than 10 years that she’s been advocating for her native borough, Barber observed that a lot of the fight can be internal. “There’s a level of that despair and hopelessness, like, ‘What’s the point?’” she said. “Having citizen scientists be a part of this, learn about what’s happening in the community is always such a positive thing.”

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HEADLINE	09/08 China megacity indefinite lockdown
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/08/chengdu-chinese-city-of-21m-has-covid-lockdown-extended-indefinitely

Chengdu, the capital of the south-western Chinese province of Sichuan, has extended the coronavirus lockdown of most of its districts indefinitely as it hopes to stem further transmissions in the city of 21.2 million.

The mega city, which has most recently battled with heatwaves, power cuts and an earthquake, was locked down on 1 September after detecting a number of cases, becoming the largest Chinese metropolis to be slapped with the curbs since Shanghai earlier this year.

The lockdown was expected to be lifted on Wednesday, but local government officials said “there are still risks of social spread in some areas,” according to Chengdu authorities.

Residents under lockdown in 16 districts, cities, counties and special zones out of the 23 under Chengdu’s jurisdiction remain under lockdown, the authorities said. They will be tested for the virus every day, authorities said late on Wednesday, without giving a date for when the lockdown would be lifted. A handful of districts were released from a full lockdown, but residents still have to undergo mass testing on Friday and Sunday.

Residents in districts no longer under a full lockdown are barred from going to other districts and are discouraged from leaving Chengdu for non-essential reasons.

The policies will be “dynamically adjusted according to the development of the epidemic,” the statement said.

The news of the extended lockdown sparked concerns that global supply chains could face further disruption. Chengdu houses a major factory for Apple suppliers Foxconn – producing iPads and MacBooks – and Jabil, which makes components for MacBooks. Both suppliers were already struggling with the power crisis sparked by China’s unprecedented heatwave.

On Thursday, the local government reported 116 new local cases, down from 121 a day ago. Of the cases reported, 57 were symptomatic and 59 were asymptomatic.

The mega city locked down last week as cases rose across several districts, allowing authorities to complete another round of mass testing. It said in an official notice that residents must “stay home in principle” to combat a new wave of infections.

Each household would be allowed to send one person out to buy groceries and essential goods a day, provided they have tested negative in the previous 24 hours, the notice said.

About 90% of flights at Chengdu’s Shuangliu Airport were cancelled on Monday.

China this year has been battling to contain the highly transmissible Omicron variant, imposing various degrees of lockdown on cities to stop its spread.

Shanghai, locked down for two months in April and May, was one of the more prominent cities that were affected by China’s so-called “dynamic zero-Covid policy”, where infections are to be stamped out when they emerge.

The flare-ups in recent months come in a year when President Xi Jinping is widely expected to secure a precedent-breaking third term as China’s leader at a once-in-five-years congress of the ruling Communist party in mid-October.

In the run-up to the congress and also to the week-long National Day holidays at the start of October, more and more cities have been urging residents to refrain from non-essential trips out of town in view of the Covid outbreaks, which have been reported in every region and province in recent weeks.

HEADLINE	09/07 Vietnam karaoke bar fire kills at least 32
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/08/vietnam-karaoke-bar-fire-kills-at-least-32-people
GIST	<p>The death toll from a fire that tore through a karaoke bar in southern Vietnam has risen to 32, state media have said.</p> <p>The blaze engulfed the second floor of the building on Tuesday night, trapping customers and staff as dense smoke filled the staircase and blocked the emergency exit, reports said.</p> <p>Many crowded on to a balcony to escape the flames, which spread quickly in the wooden interior, while others were forced to jump from the building, state media reported on Wednesday.</p> <p>Vietnam's prime minister, Pham Minh Chinh, on Wednesday ordered a further inspection of high-risk venues, especially karaoke bars.</p> <p>Photos showed plumes of smoke billowing out of the bar – located in a crowded residential neighbourhood in Thuan An city, north of commercial hub Ho Chi Minh City – as firefighters on cranes tried to extinguish the blaze.</p> <p>Cong An Nhan Dan newspaper, the official mouthpiece of the Public Security Ministry, said the death toll had risen to 32, with 17 men and 15 women killed.</p> <p>Mai Hung Dung, a top official with the ruling Communist party in Binh Duong province where the bar is located, earlier put the death toll at 23, with 11 injured. He told AFP officials were still searching for more victims.</p> <p>State media reported that eight people were found dead in the toilet.</p> <p>The initial cause of the fire was said to be an electrical short circuit, according to a report by Binh Duong authorities cited by state media.</p> <p>Witness Nguyen Sang, who lives near the karaoke bar, told the VnExpress news site that when fire trucks arrived at the scene a receptionist said there were 40 people stuck inside.</p> <p>“Many people ran outside through the main entrance, but many others could not stand the heat and they jumped down, breaking their hands and legs,” Sang said.</p> <p>Rescue workers searched through the night for anyone trapped in the 30-room bar, according to state media.</p> <p>The bar's fire prevention regulations had been checked prior to the blaze, police told state media.</p> <p>In what was previously Vietnam's deadliest fire, 13 people died in a 2018 blaze in an apartment complex in Ho Chi Minh City.</p> <p>In 2016, a fire at a karaoke facility in the capital Hanoi left 13 people dead, prompting a country-wide assessment of fire prevention measures at bars and clubs.</p> <p>Last month, three firefighters died after trying to extinguish a fire at another karaoke bar in Hanoi.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Russia destroyed Mariupol; new image
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/putin-russia-mariupol-rebuilding-showcase-ukraine-war-11662559449?mod=hp_lead_pos5
GIST	At the Philharmonic Hall in Mariupol, Ukraine, the stage is almost set for a performance this fall casting Russia as liberator of the city it battered into submission three months ago.

Where the grand piano used to sit, metal cages have been installed to hold [Ukrainian prisoners of war who defended the industrial port city](#), and now stand accused of its destruction by Mariupol's new rulers.

"The hearings will take place in the main auditorium, and the war criminals will be led to it through an iron corridor," a reporter from the propaganda arm of Russia's military said in a recent broadcast.

The tribunal, expected to start this month, is a centerpiece of Russian efforts to mold the city of Mariupol in a new image that reflects its narrative of the invasion: that Moscow is liberating Ukraine from violent nationalists.

Moscow has said it won't rebuild other smaller cities in Ukraine's east that stood in the way of its advance and were laid to waste in the fighting. But Mariupol is of particular value to both sides, strategically and symbolically.

For Ukraine, it is the site of a heroic last stand by outnumbered troops defending a [flourishing Ukrainian city](#).

In Russia's telling, it is restoring the natural order here, adorning the ruins of buildings with its tricolor.

Workers are repaving the square in front of the charred facade of the performing arts theater on which [Russian aircraft dropped two 500-kilogram bombs in March, according to human-rights organization Amnesty International](#) killing an unknown number of people [seeking shelter inside](#). Moscow denies responsibility.

The city's Russia-installed mayor proposed forcing Ukrainian prisoners of war to rebuild Mariupol but abandoned the idea because international conventions prohibit it, he told Russian state news agency TASS.

Russia is now seeking to demonstrate it can improve the material well-being of residents and restore some kind of normality. The more civilians stay in Mariupol, the more it can claim legitimacy. It would also complicate any future Ukrainian attempt to retake the city.

Moscow's efforts are bumping up against the reality that as much as 90% of residential buildings were damaged or destroyed in the battle for the city, according to United Nations estimates. Mariupol's infrastructure, and the massive steelworks that powered its economy, are also wrecked. Fixing the damage will cost no less than \$14 billion, Ukrainian officials say.

Russian officials visiting the city in recent months have posed triumphant amid the ruins, vowing to rebuild. President Vladimir Putin approved a 100-page master plan for redevelopment in July, outlining priorities up to 2040. Some officials have pointed to Grozny, the city Russia destroyed then rebuilt in Chechnya, as an example of Mariupol's bright future.

In pockets of the city, contractors from Russia have begun tearing down gutted buildings and assembling modular housing. Efforts to restore electricity and other basic services are continuing, while Russian sappers remove mines.

The new mayor promised water mains would be fixed by the end of July, but many residents are still collecting water from wells or puddles. In a city that was before February one of Ukraine's most rapidly developing, the installation of a traffic light last month was presented as a major achievement.

Promises of compensation for damaged housing have yet to materialize. Local authorities have told residents they must wait for a commission from Moscow or St. Petersburg.

It is a dramatic reversal of fortunes for Mariupol, whose recent flowering can be traced back to 2014, when Ukraine drove out Russia-backed forces that briefly took over as part of an invasion of eastern Ukraine. Seeking to make a statement, government leaders and entrepreneurs pumped investment into the city.

It thrived, [in contrast to the nearby city of Donetsk](#), which became the capital of a Moscow-run quasi-statelet known as the Donetsk People's Republic that was gripped by violence and poverty.

"We were building a different world, a better world—a European city," said Mariupol's exiled mayor, Vadym Boychenko. "They were jealous of this."

Rapid development had eroded pro-Russian sentiment in Mariupol to about 30% on the eve of the invasion, according to Mr. Boychenko. But some who supported Russia before welcomed the return. "They have been preparing for this all these eight years," he said. "This is their revenge."

A new mayor was appointed weeks before Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky ordered fighters holding out in the bunkers beneath the giant Azovstal steelworks [to surrender in May](#).

[Those fighters were primarily from the Azov Regiment](#), part of Ukraine's National Guard that was originally established as a volunteer militia in 2014 to support the country's threadbare armed forces.

Russian propaganda channels highlighted the unit's large contingent of nationalists and its commander, Andriy Biletskiy, who had led groups that espoused neo-Nazi ideas. The regiment was integrated into the National Guard later that year and Mr. Biletskiy left in 2016.

As the battle for the city died down, surviving residents emerged from basements to find their city mutilated, with bodies strewn in the street. After months of bombardment, many were simply relieved it was over, and grateful for help from any quarter.

Russian organizations arrived with food, water and information for people who had been largely cut off from the outside world since mobile-phone networks were destroyed in the early days of the siege. Huge screens mounted on buses broadcast Russia's version of the war to residents as they waited in line for aid packages.

Some welcomed the new order, which has put local members of Ukraine's main pro-Russian opposition party in charge of the city council.

"We won't let anyone, including our enemies, doubt that a wonderful Russian resort city will emerge here," said the new mayor, Konstantyn Ivashchenko, who was head of the Azovmash industrial factory, according to TASS.

At least two-thirds of the city's 450,000 inhabitants [fled during and after the battle](#). Many of those who remained were elderly and unwilling to uproot their lives. To neutralize any threat from the remaining population, the new authorities checked their identities and questioned them, detaining anyone deemed a threat.

And then the cleanup efforts began.

Authorities recruited residents to sweep the streets and dig up the remains of thousands of people buried under the rubble of collapsed buildings, or in makeshift graves around the city. "At least the smell of corpses is gone," said a schoolteacher who remained in Mariupol, in a phone interview.

DNA samples were taken and added to a database so missing people can be traced in the future, authorities said.

The master plan adopted in July identifies the construction of a new cemetery as a priority for Mariupol's development. With at least 22,000 people killed during Russia's assault, existing graveyards are filling up.

A central aim is to provide housing for the existing population before the onset of winter. Builders were brought in from Russia to help.

Within weeks, several five-story apartment blocks were sprouting up. On Kuprina Street, an entire residential complex materialized, with a playground, parking lot and exercise equipment.

Its location on the western edge of the city—nearest the front line with Ukrainian forces—has raised some residents' suspicion it is designed to shield against any future advance on Mariupol. In any case, only a fraction of the damaged housing stock has been replaced, say residents.

Ukrainian officials are expecting a fresh exodus from the city as temperatures start to drop. Exiled local officials have also repeatedly warned of a cholera outbreak.

Tatyana Marena, the vice rector of Mariupol State University, left in May, but returned to her hometown in July for several weeks to visit relatives and deliver medicine that is no longer available in the city.

She kept away from her old campus, saying she didn't want to run into five colleagues who joined its new faculty and recently appeared in a photograph alongside Russia's minister for higher education, Valery Falkov.

She said she saw little evidence of rebuilding, except for scaffolding around the concert hall, and was pained to see some people react with joy to attempts to restore basic services.

"Russia destroyed our city—destroyed our lives—and we should be glad they are supplying us with water?" she said.

Moscow and St. Petersburg donated books and buses as workers rushed to rebuild enough schools for 15,900 children Russia estimates have remained in Mariupol. A shortage of teachers was more problematic.

Three schools approached one teacher with offers of a higher salary than she receives from Ukraine's Ministry of Education, where she gives online classes, but she couldn't face singing the Russian national anthem. Many of her colleagues, however, accepted. "I don't blame them," she said. "It's either that, or clearing rubble."

The fate of the Azovstal steelworks, which together with the Illich plant generated 40,000 jobs for the city, is unclear. The Russian master plan lays out several options, including transforming Azovstal into a recreational facility with a museum and memorial dedicated to Russia's victory.

Steel magnate Rinat Akhmetov, who owns both plants and is Ukraine's richest man, told a Polish newspaper he would spare no effort to rebuild them "when the Ukrainian flag flies again over Mariupol."

Inside the city, however, hopes that Ukrainian control will be restored soon—if ever—are fainter. Soldiers from the Donetsk People's Republic are manning checkpoints while their families relax on the city's beaches, according to former residents who have visited.

Vasyl Pikuz left the city after refusing to stay on as director of the philharmonic orchestra. "This is the new Mariupol," he said.

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HEADLINE	09/07 Iran expands nuclear program as talks falter
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/iran-expands-nuclear-program-as-talks-to-revive-2015-deal-falter-11662569582?mod=lead_feature_below_a_pos1
GIST	Iran's stockpile of highly enriched uranium has grown enough to easily produce enough fuel for an atomic bomb, the United Nations atomic agency reported Wednesday, as talks to revive the 2015 nuclear deal falter over Tehran's last-minute demands for U.S. guarantees.

[Iran's cache of highly enriched uranium](#) of 60% purity increased by about 30% in the quarter to August 21, reaching 55.6 kilograms, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency's latest quarterly report sent to member states and seen by The Wall Street Journal. Its total stockpile of enriched uranium has grown to 3,941 kilograms, the report said.

The highly enriched uranium can easily be converted into weapons grade fuel, with Iran's stockpile of that material well above the minimum amount needed to fuel one nuclear weapon.

Iran says its nuclear program is entirely for civilian purposes and that it has never sought to work on nuclear weapons.

In recent weeks, the IAEA has also reported a sharp increase in the number of advanced centrifuges Tehran has installed and fed with uranium at its main nuclear facilities. Iran has also removed IAEA cameras that were overseeing the production of centrifuges so Iran's inventory of the machines is unknown.

The agency warned in its report that Tehran's removal of the cameras, which came after Iran was rebuked by the IAEA board of member states in early June, will pose "considerable challenges" in specifying how many machines Iran has, should the nuclear deal be restored.

The agency also said Iran's actions "had detrimental implications" for its ability to assure members of the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program.

The U.S., Iran and other world powers are seeking to restore the 2015 agreement, which lifted most international sanctions on Iran in exchange for tight but temporary restrictions on its nuclear program. The negotiations center on the steps the U.S., which left the agreement in 2018, and Iran must take to return into compliance with the deal.

After the European Union tabled what it called a final text in Vienna on Aug. 8 to restore the nuclear deal, Tehran and Washington appeared to be closing the last gaps on an agreement. Crucially, Iran seemed to have dropped its demand for an upfront guarantee that the IAEA would close a probe into undeclared nuclear material it has found in Iran.

However, in a note sent on Sep. 1, Iran dialed up its demands on guarantees to ensure it wins economic benefits from the deal, on the pace of U.S. sanctions-lifting and pushed for new language on what happens with the agency's nuclear probe.

Washington said Iran's response wasn't constructive and European diplomats have said a deal before the midterm elections in the U.S. in November looks increasingly unlikely now.

"I am sorry to say that I am less confident today...about the prospects of closing the deal right now," Josep Borrell, the EU foreign policy chief who coordinates the negotiations, said Monday.

While under a restored deal, Iran would have to ship out or dilute most of its stockpile of enriched uranium, including all of its 60% material, its centrifuges would remain close at hand.

The increase in the number of centrifuges Iran has installed, is operating and producing is therefore a growing concern for Western diplomats seeking to revive the nuclear deal.

Under the deal, diplomats say, in addition to the roughly 5,000 first generation centrifuges Iran is allowed to deploy to enrich uranium, most of the excess advanced centrifuges will be uninstalled but stored intact under an IAEA seal at Iran's nuclear facilities.

The more advanced centrifuges Iran has available to reinstall, the lower the amount of time it would take Iran, under a restored deal, to reproduce enough nuclear fuel for one weapon—Tehran's so-called breakout time.

	<p>Should a deal not take place, Iran’s growing inventory of centrifuges could be enough to produce thousands of kilograms of low enriched uranium a year, a senior Western diplomat said, which if converted to weapons grade material, could fuel several nuclear weapons a year.</p> <p>Iran currently has around 2,000 advanced centrifuges enriching uranium, almost all of which were forbidden from operating under the nuclear deal.</p> <p>In a second report circulated on Wednesday, the agency said there had been no progress in resolving its investigation into the undeclared nuclear material. “Iran has not engaged with the agency,” the report said.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Updated Covid booster shots on way
SOURCE	https://mynorthwest.com/3621868/30k-doses-of-updated-covid-19-booster-shot-available-in-king-county-this-week-with-more-on-the-way/
GIST	<p>Updated COVID-19 booster shots are on their way to western Washington, with tens of thousands of doses arriving as early as this week.</p> <p>King County is expected to get about 92,000 doses of the updated bivalent vaccines over the next few weeks, according to Public Health – Seattle & King County Director Dr. Jeff Duchin.</p> <p>Of those doses, 30,000 could arrive at local healthcare providers and pharmacies as soon as this week.</p> <p>“These updated vaccines are now recommended to improve the duration and strength of protection against today’s COVID-19 variants,” said Duchin. “There’s also reason to believe that they will provide broader protection against future strains that may evolve but that is not known with certainty.”</p> <p>An initial allocation of 191,100 doses are expected to arrive at providers throughout the state beginning this week, with more doses arriving in the following weeks, according to the state department of health.</p> <p>Anyone aged 12 or older is eligible for the new booster if at least two months have passed since receiving their first two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine or their last booster shot.</p> <p>King County’s vaccination site at the Auburn Outlet Collection is expected to begin offering the updated booster vaccine on Friday and walk-in appointments will be available.</p> <p>The county’s Eastgate Public Health Center vaccination site will begin offering the updated shots next week.</p> <p>Healthcare providers across the county are also expected to begin offering the booster over the next two weeks, including UW Medicine, which currently has a waitlist to schedule an appointment at its three vaccination sites.</p> <p>DOH is urging the public to be patient in the coming weeks, as demand for the updated booster doses is expected to exceed the inventory available.</p> <p>More information about the updated booster vaccines including where to find a vaccination site near you is available on the DOH website.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/08 US: Russia forced separations, war crime
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/08/world/ukraine-russia-war#the-united-states-accuses-moscow-of-forcibly-moving-up-to-1-6-million-ukrainians-to-russia

GIST

The United States on Wednesday accused Moscow of sending up to 1.6 million Ukrainians to Russia and subjecting them to a “filtration” process involving invasive security screening, interrogation, family separation and detention.

Thousands of children — including 1,800 in July — have undergone the filtration process, and some have been separated from their parents and placed up for adoption in Russia, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations said at a U.N. Security Council meeting on Wednesday, which was requested by the United States and Albania to discuss the forced displacement of Ukrainians.

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the U.S. ambassador, told the Security Council that Moscow was transferring Ukrainians “to prepare for an attempted annexation” and “to provide a fraudulent veneer of legitimacy for the Russian occupation and eventual, purported annexation of even more Ukrainian territory.”

Ms. Thomas-Greenfield said Russia’s actions amounted to a war crime and a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which mandates the protection of civilians in conflict zones. She called on Russia to grant access to international observers to investigate the camps and detention facilities where Russia is holding Ukrainian civilians.

The meeting followed a [report](#) by Human Rights Watch that documented the forcible transfer of Ukrainians from Mariupol and the Kharkiv region to Russian territory or areas in Ukraine controlled by Russia. The report, which was released last week, said that Russia’s actions constituted war crimes.

“Forced transfers and the filtration process constitute and involve separate and distinct abuses against civilians, although many Ukrainian civilians experienced both,” the report said.

Russia’s U.N. ambassador, Vasily Nebenzya, denied the allegations, calling them disinformation and propaganda “unleashed by Ukraine and its Western backers.”

The Russian Ministry of Defense has [framed the moving of Ukrainians](#) as part of a humanitarian relief effort. Mr. Nebenzya said there was no legal definition of “filtration” and that the security screening of Ukrainians was “normal military procedure” similar to what migrants undergo at the southern border of the United States. He reminded the Council that the administration of former President Donald J. Trump had forcibly separated migrant children from their parents, and that the United States had held prisoners without trial for years at Guantánamo Bay.

Ilze Brands Kehris, assistant secretary general for human rights at the U.N., told the Council that her office had verified cases of the filtration process that resulted in “numerous human rights violations, including of the rights to liberty, security of person and privacy.”

The U.N.’s human rights agency has also documented a significant number of cases where Ukrainians were forced to relocate to Russia but that, once there, they had freedom of movement and that some had chosen to travel to other countries or return to Ukraine, Ms. Brands Kehris said.

Ferit Hoxha, Albania’s ambassador to the U.N., said the displacement camps were “another face of Russia’s brutality.”

“If you pay allegiance to the occupier, you are free; if you don’t, you are detained and may disappear,” he said.

Another Security Council meeting is scheduled for Thursday afternoon. Russia requested the meeting to discuss “real threats,” including the foreign sources providing military equipment to Ukraine.

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HEADLINE 09/08 Putin moves Russia closer to China

SOURCE <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/08/world/ukraine-russia-war#putin-xi-meeting>

GIST	<p>President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia said on Wednesday that he expected to meet in person next week with his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, setting up an encounter that could help the Kremlin expand its relationship with a country he called a “stable and reliable” partner.</p> <p>In televised remarks at an economic conference in the far eastern Russian city of Vladivostok, Mr. Putin said he hoped to see Mr. Xi “soon,” at a gathering of Asian leaders in Uzbekistan on Sept. 15 and 16.</p> <p>Chinese officials did not immediately confirm that Mr. Xi would travel to Uzbekistan for the meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, an eight-nation group that also includes India, Pakistan and four Central Asian countries. But Russia’s ambassador to China described the planned session as the leaders’ “first full-fledged summit during the pandemic.”</p> <p>Mr. Putin’s remarks came at the outset of a meeting that included Li Zhanshu, the head of the Chinese legislature and the third-highest-ranking member of the Chinese Communist Party.</p> <p>The severing of economic ties with Western countries after its invasion of Ukraine has pushed Russia into a speedy reorientation of its economy toward Asia, most of all China, making any meeting with Mr. Xi particularly important.</p> <p>While Beijing has not declared support for the invasion, it has echoed Kremlin talking points in describing the United States as the “main instigator” of the conflict. And it has provided Russia with much-needed economic support, both as a supplier of everything from cars to smartphones as European and American companies pull out of Russia and as a buyer of energy exports that are no longer in demand in the West.</p> <p>The economic conference on Wednesday included discussions about the construction of a proposed pipeline to China that would be fed by natural gas from Siberian fields that was previously intended for European countries.</p> <p>Mr. Putin said in a question-and-answer session that Moscow and Beijing had agreed on the main parameters of the new pipeline, and that he planned a separate meeting in Uzbekistan with Mr. Xi and the president of Mongolia, the country through which the proposed pipeline would pass.</p> <p>“Our Chinese friends are difficult negotiators,” Mr. Putin said, adding that Moscow and Beijing had agreed to pay for the Russian gas in their currencies. “However, they are stable and reliable partners and the market is colossal.”</p> <p>Russia, for its part, has offered geopolitical backing to China, including in the escalating tensions around Taiwan. And the country hosted Chinese troops for military exercises this month in far eastern Russia.</p> <p>An in-person meeting between Mr. Putin and Mr. Xi — who has not left China since the start of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 — could offer further symbolism of a Chinese-Russian alliance opposing a Western-led world order.</p> <p>“This summit promises to be interesting, because it will be the first full-fledged summit during the pandemic,” Russia’s ambassador to China, Andrei Denisov, was quoted as saying on Wednesday by the Russian state-run Tass news agency.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/08 Baltic States ban Russians by land crossing
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/08/world/ukraine-russia-war#the-baltic-states-agree-to-bar-land-crossings-by-russian-tourists
GIST	RIGA, Latvia — Alarmed that their eastern borders with Russia and Belarus have become a popular channel for Russian tourists traveling to Europe while their country wages war in Ukraine, the three Baltic countries agreed on Wednesday to ban Russians from crossing into their countries by land, sealing one of the last relatively easy routes out of Russia.

The European Union banned flights to and from Russia soon after Moscow invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, with only Serbia, which is not a member of the bloc, still offering regular flights. The suspension of air traffic meant that the easiest and cheapest option for many Russian tourists was to travel by land to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland to catch flights to holiday destinations.

In a statement to The New York Times, Ingrida Simonyte, the prime minister of Lithuania, said that Russians, including those with valid visas, had “no reason to go to beaches and shopping here when Putin is killing the people of Ukraine.” She added: “We have been, are and will be attentive to people who are threatened for their activities or political position in Russia. But I want to stress that an E.U. visa is not an automatic right to cross the E.U. border.”

In a confidential report, the European Union’s border service, Frontex, recorded that more than 928,000 Russians had entered Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland in the six-month period after the start of the war.

Under pressure from Ukraine and countries in Eastern and Central Europe with bitter memories of past Russian aggression, European foreign ministers last week [agreed to suspend a 2007 agreement with Moscow](#) that makes it easier for Russians to get visas, but they balked at imposing a ban on all Russian tourists.

France and Germany opposed such a ban as a form of collective punishment that would only feed the Russian government’s narrative about what it characterizes as a defensive war against Western encroachment.

The Baltic States, which are among Ukraine’s most robust supporters in the European Union, have now decided to do this on their own, hoping that other members of the bloc will follow their lead. Finland has slashed the number of visas it issues to Russians but has not barred entry to those already holding valid visas, insisting that the European Union must act as a whole if the flow of tourists from Russia is to be slowed.

Speaking by telephone on Wednesday after a meeting of Baltic and Nordic foreign ministers, the Latvian foreign minister, Edgars Rinkevics, said that Latvia and its two fellow Baltic states, all of which had previously imposed their own restrictions, had decided they needed to act in a “coordinated manner” to close loopholes and stanch the flow of Russians traveling through their territory. The restrictions on Russian travelers, which the ministers said was necessary for national security as well as for moral reasons, should come into force within 10 days following approval by national authorities in each Baltic state, Mr. Rinkevics said.

Some exceptions will be made, he said, for truck drivers, humanitarian cases and Russians fleeing persecution, but vacationers and other Russians holding valid visas to the European bloc’s border-free Schengen zone will not be allowed in. The 26 countries in this zone usually allow free travel without border checks and honor visas issued by one another, but they can impose restrictions on national security grounds.

Banning Russians tourists, Mr. Rinkevics said, would keep out Russians who “just want to cross our borders to take a flight to Barcelona” or other sunny holiday destinations.

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HEADLINE	09/08 New fighting in northeastern Ukraine
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/08/world/ukraine-russia-war#new-fighting-is-reported-in-northeastern-ukraine-after-focus-turned-to-the-south
GIST	Fighting in northeastern Ukraine this week suggests that Kyiv may be attempting to exploit the redeployment of Russian forces defending against a Ukrainian counteroffensive in the south as the sprawling conflict continues into its seventh month.

Ukraine launched an attack outside Kharkiv — the country’s second largest city — targeting the town of Balakliya, which is about 55 miles outside the city, according to Russian media reports and the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington research group. Ukrainian forces “likely drove Russian forces back” from the town on Tuesday and also likely captured the nearby village of Verbivka, the institute said.

In his nightly address on Wednesday, President Volodymyr Zelensky heralded “good news from the Kharkiv region,” though he said it was not the moment to name specific communities restored to Ukrainian control.

“Each success of our military in one direction or another changes the general situation along the entire front line in favor of Ukraine,” he said, adding that the more losses Russia’s military sustains, the better positioned Ukraine will be to push back on all fronts.

In its overnight report, the institute wrote that what appeared to be “opportunistic counterattacks” had allowed Ukraine to retake several settlements in the southern part of Kharkiv Province. The counterattacks were most likely “prompted and facilitated” by Russian redeployments to the south, the report said.

Reports of Russian troop deployments could not be independently verified.

Any push by Ukraine to reclaim ground on the front in the northeast could complicate Russia’s ability to distribute its forces in the conflict’s other main areas of fighting: the eastern Donbas region, made up of Luhansk and Donetsk Provinces, and Kherson, where Ukraine announced on Aug. 29 it had launched a counteroffensive to reclaim territory lost since the invasion began in February.

The counteroffensive was already posing a test to Russia’s ability to coordinate forces on multiple fronts, a British military intelligence report said on Wednesday.

Ukrainian efforts around Balakliya could have repercussions for Russian logistics in the area of Iziium, a city about 40 miles southeast of Kharkiv, as well as in towns and villages along a jagged frontline between the two. Moscow has used Iziium as a base for its broader attack on the Donbas region, where separatists backed by Moscow have fought Ukrainian forces since 2014.

President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia has prioritized capturing that region. In early July, Russian forces seized the last city in Luhansk, but since then their attempt to advance in neighboring Donetsk has slowed.

Ukraine repelled an attempt by Moscow to seize Kharkiv earlier this year, pushing Russian forces back to positions near the border which, at its closest point, is a mere 30 miles away. But Russian forces remain close enough to launch regular missile strikes, which continue to batter the area.

Russian forces sent shells slamming into the Nemyshlianskyi neighborhood of Kharkiv overnight, according to the city’s mayor, Ihor Terekhov, wrecking several cars and setting an industrial facility on fire.

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HEADLINE	09/07 Food insecurity families w/children decline
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/07/us/politics/food-insecurity-families.html
GIST	WASHINGTON — Food insecurity for households with children declined to its lowest rate in two decades last year, the Agriculture Department said on Wednesday, as government assistance programs continued to blunt the effect of the coronavirus on the economy.

The department's findings were in line with data last year showing that vast expansions of government aid [helped reduce hunger](#). But experts warned that picture was almost certain to change as pandemic-era programs expire and inflation remains high.

"The social safety net for families with children was more generous in 2021 than it has been, and better than it is now," said Sarah Bowen, a sociology professor at North Carolina State University and an expert in food insecurity. "This shows that food insecurity is a solvable problem. We have the power to fix it."

In [a report released on Wednesday](#), the Agriculture Department said that about 4.6 million households with children were food insecure at some point, a rate of [12.5 percent](#). That was the lowest rate since at least 1998, the oldest year with comparable data.

Overall, household food insecurity remained level in 2021, the department said. About 13.5 million American households, or about 10.2 percent, were food insecure, or had difficulty providing food for all family members because of a lack of money. That was statistically unchanged from the previous two years.

But for households without children, particularly for women and seniors living alone, food insecurity increased.

Unfortunately, Ms. Bowen added, the report "also shows that it can get worse if we do nothing."

Data [released last year](#) showed that food insecurity remained unchanged, in spite of mass unemployment and an economic downturn brought on by the pandemic. The finding was at odds with past experiences, when recessions led to a spike in hunger. Experts attributed that shift to big expansions of government aid, which continued into 2021, and additional changes to food assistance programs.

Among them were an [expansion of the child tax credit](#), which gave most families hundreds of dollars a month; pandemic legislation, which [increased benefits](#) for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, and made school meals universally free; and an emergency program that reimbursed families for missed school meals.

Those changes, coupled with a recovering economy and school reopenings, particularly benefited households with children and contributed to the decline in hunger among families, experts said.

By contrast, households without children and seniors did not qualify for the expanded child tax credit or benefit from free school meals. Lauren Bauer, a researcher at the Brookings Institution who specializes in social safety net policies, said the rise in food insecurity among those groups could also be attributed to changes in household size, including losing family members or the [declining propensity of older people to work](#).

Food insecurity also declined for households with Black Americans, to 19.8 percent last year from [21.7 percent in 2020](#). The gap between Black and white households also narrowed to 12.8 percent from 14.6 percent in 2020, but remained wider than the prepandemic figure of 11.2 percent in 2019.

Experts said that the portrait of hunger in the United States would change this year given that many of the assistance programs had lapsed.

"Even though we have evidence that these policies worked, we haven't managed to preserve most of them," Professor Bowen said.

"I'm worried that 2022 is going to be a really hard year for lots of families, and that there isn't the same sense of urgency that there was two years ago," she added.

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SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/08/us/california-heat.html
GIST	<p>SAN FRANCISCO — California continued to suffer on Wednesday through scorching heat that helped propel two wildfires and strained the state’s electric grid, even as temperatures slightly dipped from the prior day.</p> <p>Some parts of the state saw scant relief, as downtown Sacramento set a daily temperature record with a 109-degree reading — lower than the 116 mark on Tuesday. Modesto was only slightly cooler, tying a daily record at 107.</p> <p>By the end of Wednesday, the state again avoided rolling blackouts. The grid was severely strained and entered a Stage 2 level of emergency but did not reach the highest level Stage 3 alert as on Tuesday.</p> <p>Electricity demand briefly surpassed 50,000 megawatts but remained below the record-setting peak of 52,061 on Tuesday. The state again urged residents to conserve power during the late afternoon and evening to avoid overwhelming the state’s power grid. The California Independent System Operator also extended the time range it was asking people to reduce power use Thursday; its 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. request added an extra hour at each end.</p> <p>Six Northern California cities — Lodi, Palo Alto, Santa Clara, Ukiah, Healdsburg and Alameda — briefly lost power Tuesday evening when the Northern California Power Agency, which provides energy to those areas, misinterpreted an instruction from the California I.S.O., grid officials said Wednesday.</p> <p>“There was some level of confusion between our dispatchers and their dispatchers about what was being requested,” Elliot Mainzer, the chief executive of the California I.S.O., told reporters Wednesday morning, adding that the city outages were not the reason the state avoided blackouts.</p> <p>While the state grid was holding up Wednesday, two wildfires grew rapidly. In Riverside County, the Fairview fire exploded, growing from 5,000 acres in the morning to 19,377 acres by night, with 5 percent containment. In Northern California, the Mosquito fire quickly reached 5,705 acres about 50 miles northeast of Sacramento, prompting the evacuation of several small communities.</p> <p>Temperatures are expected to climb Thursday before cooling slightly at the end of the week, when Southern California could see heavy rains and gusting winds from nearby Hurricane Kay, according to the National Weather Service. The Central Valley is expected to escape triple-digit temperatures starting Saturday.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Audit: Coast Guard needs tsunami plans
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/federal-audit-finds-many-coast-guard-units-northwest-lack-tsunami-evacuation-plans/MBHIYZ4ZBBBMNFTZAURWQKBQJU/
GIST	<p>A new federal audit finds the U.S. Coast Guard needs to step up planning for a tsunami off the Northwest coast.</p> <p>The U.S. Government Accountability Office found that half of the most at-risk units don’t have written evacuation plans for their personnel.</p> <p>A new GAO report says about 3,000 personnel stationed along the outer coasts of Washington and Oregon face a high risk.</p> <p>“They’re first responders in the community, but in the case of a tsunami, they could become the victims,” said Heather MacLeod, acting director for Homeland Security & Justice Issues at GAO.</p> <p>The GAO report found that only 19 of 39 Coast Guard units have written tsunami evacuation plans.</p>

	<p>The GAO found that the Coast Guard requires evacuation plans but doesn't ensure anyone follows through, and the existing plans aren't practiced.</p> <p>Only four of the plans include maps of where to go.</p> <p>"We're actively working on it," said Lt. Stephen Nolan of the U.S. Coast Guard in Seattle.</p> <p>He said the agency started work in May 2021 on evacuation plans as the GAO began its audit.</p> <p>Nolan also assures that if Coast Guard units are hit by a tsunami, others will move in to help.</p> <p>"What the Coast Guard does, and we do well, is we surge assets from outside that area to be able to respond to natural disasters," Nolan said.</p> <p>Although scientists increasingly say there is a tsunami risk in Puget Sound, the audit focused on higher-risk areas on the outer coast where warning times are expected to be shorter.</p> <p>GAO officials said the Coast Guard has agreed to implement its recommendations to develop evacuation plans, provide guidance, and exercise them in three to four years.</p> <p>GAO officials say they hope the work is done sooner.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Amazon not require tech workers in office
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/most-amazon-tech-workers-will-not-be-required-return-office/YP3VXRKOHFAM3OFF5WBXRSU72A/
GIST	<p>Most Amazon tech workers will no longer be required to return to work at the office.</p> <p>Amazon's CEO said he is now open to having corporate workers keep working from home.</p> <p>Andy Jassy, who was hand-picked by Jeff Bezos to be CEO a year ago, said in a summit Wednesday he does not have a plan to require people to return to Amazon headquarters or any other corporate Amazon office.</p> <p>The move appears to be more about a new way of productivity for tech workers and less about avoiding illness.</p> <p>Amazon tech workers were ordered to work from home in early 2020 when COVID-19 started and began to spread.</p> <p>More recently, Amazon created a goal of having an office-centric culture.</p> <p>Jassy said that most tech workers have returned to physical offices but for only a few days a week. However, creative teams still meet in person.</p> <p>Other tech companies like Google and Apple have ordered their tech employees back to the office. However, some workers have been pushing back.</p> <p>KIRO 7 was told Amazon is staying open to recruiting tech workers in remote areas as they live far away from the nearest office.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Schools impact Pierce Co. deputy levels
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/start-of-school-impacts-deputy-staffing-levels-in-pierce-county

GIST	<p>TACOMA, Wash. — Back to school could create some public safety concerns in Pierce County.</p> <p>School resource officers from the sheriff's department are now returning to campus and that means fewer deputies are available for patrol.</p> <p>The Pierce County Sheriff's Department has nine school resource officers who have been helping out with 911 calls throughout the summer.</p> <p>Now that teens and children are returning to class, the sheriff's department said those SROs will play another vital role in building relationships with those students.</p> <p>"Our deputies are looking to be interactive with kids in a positive sense and teaching them about drugs and good behavior and not getting into trouble at school," said Pierce Co. Sheriff's Sgt. Darren Moss. "We want to make an impression with kids at an early age so they know they can trust our deputies."</p> <p>However, this year there's a trade-off. The sheriff's department has 51 vacancies on patrol and is short another 54 corrections deputies in the county jail.</p> <p>During the summer months, SROs have been helping to fill the gaps.</p> <p>"So we have minimum staffing of seven on dayshift, add six SROs to that shift, now you got 13 people. That helps us to respond to calls faster," Moss said.</p> <p>As the department re-assigns its SROs to schools in the unincorporated county.. that's likely to have an impact on non-priority calls for help.</p> <p>"They're prioritizing their calls but still things are important like burglaries. I was burglarized last December," said Robert Kessler, who is concerned about recent shootings near where he lives.</p> <p>Other community members like Becky McCarley said the staffing squeeze shakes their sense of safety.</p> <p>"And I want to be able to call 911 if I need them and expect them to be there," she said.</p> <p>Moss said the SROs can always leave a school campus to help respond to major incidents but the reassignments might have a bigger impact this year because they are short-handed already.</p> <p>"When we're looking at a large decrease in the numbers that we have for our staffing, it hurts that much more every time we go back to school and we have to let those nine bodies go back out of patrol again," Moss said.</p> <p>The sheriff's department has ramped up its recruitment efforts and managed to get seven new deputies hired but is still short dozens more.</p> <p>The staffing crunch comes during a crime surge in Pierce County.</p> <p>When comparing January through July to the same periods over the past five years, aggravated assaults are 35 percent above normal year-to-date changes.</p> <p>Rape is now 28 percent above normal levels. Armed robbery is up 105 percent and car theft is up 111 percent, according to the sheriff's department.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 King Co. law enforcement staff shortages
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/king-county-sheriffs-office-combatting-staffing-shortages

GIST	<p>KING COUNTY, Wash. — Unions representing 2,000 law enforcement officers in King County are sounding the alarm on dangerously low staffing levels they say are affecting police response.</p> <p>Union leaders are reporting the agencies they represent are hundreds of officers short, leading to the jail being closed for new bookings for hours and longer response times.</p> <p>In addition to those losses, union leaders say their agencies have more than 450 officers eligible for retirement, and they just can't absorb any more losses.</p> <p>"In Seattle we've lost 122 [officers] this year alone, we're projecting to lose 180 at the close of this year," Seattle Police Officers Guild President Mike Solan said, "Folks this isn't good."</p> <p>Unions representing Seattle Police officers, King County corrections officers and King County Sheriff's deputies are pleading with the public to take notice of the staffing crisis many agencies are facing.</p> <p>"Row we are losing officers faster than we can hire them," King County Corrections Guild President Dennis Folk said, "We have about 100 vacancies."</p> <p>"Our jail was recently closed overnight for booking," Folk said, "For about 12 hours they couldn't book people into jail because of it."</p> <p>Union leaders throwing their support behind Federal Way Mayor Jim Ferrell, who's running for King County Prosecuting Attorney.</p> <p>"This tremendous backlog of 5,000 felony cases of which over 180 are homicides, over 500 sexual assault cases," Ferrell said, "These cases are awaiting trial, they're stuck in the system, and there's no discernable plan moving forward; that's a failure of justice."</p> <p>But the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office says they've made efforts to tackle that backlog by asking the King County Council for millions in funding to hire more staff and considering bringing judges out of retirement to move cases forward.</p> <p>"Last month alone we charged more than 700 crimes," Casey McNerthney with the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office said, "What we're doing and what we're going to keep doing is asking people who are a danger to the community to be held in the King County Jail."</p> <p>Ferrell's opponent in the race for King County Prosecuting Attorney, Leesa Manion, also said in response: <i>"Today my opponent claimed he would have a plan, but instead relied on the same soundbites and scare tactics. However disappointing and deceptive it is for my opponent to rely on half truths and fear mongering in support of his campaign for Prosecutor, his decision to stand with -- and receive support from-- SPOG leader Mike Solan truly reflects the troubling foundations of his campaign. Solan, through his divisive podcast and legal actions, has dismissed the dire significance of the January 6 Insurrection, and continues to fight efforts to reveal the names of the six SPOG members who participated in the attack on our democracy. A truly independent prosecutor, committed to equal representation and safety, would not accept support from someone fighting transparency and justice."</i></p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Stadium sports visitors: homeless camps
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/its-embarrassing-as-seattle-welcomes-visitors-on-monday-homeless-encampments-still-se
GIST	SEATTLE, Wash. — We are now just five days away from Russell Wilson returning to Seattle for the first time as a visiting quarterback. It will be one of the biggest games of the NFL season and the city will be under the national spotlight.

However, just outside of the stadiums, some fans and visiting fans may need to walk near homeless encampments that have not been fully addressed.

That includes one on 4th avenue south, across from Lumen Field and T-Mobile Park that KOMO has reported on before: <https://komonews.com/news/project-seattle/washington-has-begun-clearing-camps-from-state-property-with-more-to-come-officials-say> It sits on WSDOT property.

On Wednesday, KOMO talked to fans going to the Mariners game, who walked by the homeless encampment on WSDOT land.

"It's embarrassing," one Mariners fan said, "I think it's kind of a black eye on the city of Seattle, I do," another fan said.

Another local area fan visiting the ballpark said it shows that the city's homelessness and housing plan still has issues, "if anything, I think it's a reminder that we have things we need to be working on and stuff and things to address still."

Minutes away, we talked to Russell Meyer who works along 3rd Avenue South. That stretch of roadway is another place where fans park and walk to the games.

We have been documenting work on that area for months: <https://komonews.com/news/project-seattle/seattle-safe-lot-for-rv-owners-returning-but-will-it-work-this-time-after-prior-failure>

City crews did clean up the roadway about a month ago, but Meyer said the RVs are starting to come back.

"Just a revolving door," Meyer said, "the city is just an endless sweep."

Meyer added that when he goes to the baseball and football games, he walks along that road, sometimes with his family. Meyer remembers walking through the area, going to games decades ago, and lamenting over the changes he has seen.

"It's so sad that I have to be on guard for what my kids could experience, not just the aspect of homelessness, but theft, vandalism, getting hurt," Meyer said, "some of the major roadways are littered with illegal camping, drugs, I've got to worry about them (his kids) stepping on needles."

Meyer also expressed a feeling of embarrassment, for how out-of-town visitors may judge the areas around the football stadium.

"The view that you see on Monday Night Football, is not what you will see when you walk to the game. It's not pretty," Meyer said.

KOMO also talked to SODO Business Improvement Area Executive Director Erin Goodman who said it is time for a new path forward.

"The obvious goal is to move people inside, where it's safer, where they can start to repair their lives. At the same point, we know that there are several people every time that choose not to. We need to take a line and say ok, 'here are your options, but you can't stay here,'" Goodman added, "I realize that might not be very popular, but doing the same thing over and over again is not working in SODO and we need to address the situation. As I've said before, not everyone living in one of these RVs is engaged in criminal activity, but we still have significant criminal activity, coming out of some of these RVs."

A spokesperson in Mayor Bruce Harrell's office told KOMO, "the Unified Care Team is aware of the big game on Monday, Sept. 12. Work in the areas surrounding the stadiums, such as trash mitigation and encampment site removals, has already been done in the last few weeks, and site inspections will continue this week to schedule additional work for the Unified Care Team."

	<p>They went on to say, “The Unified Care Team works hand-in-hand with our partners at KCRHA (King County Regional Homelessness Authority) and numerous non-profits to do outreach to people living unsheltered and offer shelter that meets their needs and puts them on a path to permanent housing. As of July 31, more than 700+ shelter referrals were accepted by people living unsheltered at encampments before the sites were removed.”</p> <p>A spokesperson for WSDOT has acknowledged but has not yet answered our questions. We will update this article if we receive a response.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Downtown Spokane new sit-lie ordinance
SOURCE	https://www.krem.com/article/news/local/homeless/spokane-sit-and-lie-ordinance/293-fbfc4913-f6b7-4498-b458-aa94322161ad
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. — Spokane Mayor Nadine Woodward announced Wednesday that the city will begin enforcing its new sit and lie ordinance in the downtown area effective immediately.</p> <p>Under Spokane's current illegal camping ordinance, camping is not allowed on public property and a person cannot sit or lie on the sidewalk between 6 a.m. and midnight. However, the ordinance is also not enforced if there is no shelter space.</p> <p>“We are setting an expectation that individuals take advantage of the opportunities available to them to receive services in a safe, healthy, and humane environment,” Woodward said in a statement. “Our downtown needs to be a safe and healthy place for everyone and living on streets, alleyways, viaducts, and fields is not in anyone’s best interest.”</p> <p>Spokane police began telling homeless residents that the new shelter on Trent Avenue would be open last week, according to Woodward. Police also began informing people of the city's available resources.</p> <p>“Our first priority is to get individuals connected to services that will help them take their next steps in their homelessness journey,” Woodward said in a statement. “Adding the enforcement element presents those who are reluctant to accept help with an option and an opportunity.”</p> <p>Woodward announced proposed changes to the city's camping and sit and lie ordinances that will limit when and where people are allowed to camp on city property in July. During a press conference, she said Spokane makes it easy for people to be homeless and said officials need to focus on getting homeless individuals into assistance rather than pushing them around the city.</p> <p>The city's camping ordinance has not been updated since 2018 and the sit and lie ordinance has not been updated since 2014. The current ordinance prohibits camping on city-owned public property when there is not enough shelter space.</p> <p>Both the city council and the mayor's proposals called for removing the blanket exemption "when shelter space is unavailable." Both also allow for enforcement at all times in some specified locations.</p> <p>Both proposals would also enforce the camping ordinance in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 100 feet of railroad viaducts • Within 35 feet of the Spokane River • All city parks and city-owned property <p>Both proposals also have no effect on people camping on private or state-owned land, meaning the people camping in the lot near I-90 would be exempt from both ordinances.</p>

The mayor's proposed changes, however, take the ordinance a step further. Woodward's proposed changes would expand enforcement to within a half-mile of city-supported congregate shelters, as well as within the boundaries of the Business Improvement District and the downtown police precinct.

Under Woodward's proposal, camping would be illegal from Cataldo Avenue to the railroad tracks near First Avenue, from Walnut to North Division, from the north bank of Riverfront Park to I-90 and from Sherman out to near Inland Empire Highway.

Spokane City Council is set to consider updates to the unauthorized camping ordinance during its next meeting on Monday night.

One homeless resident in Spokane, Oliver Stuart, says he is not worried about the sit and lie ordinances because he is disabled, an exception according to the Spokane Municipal Code. However, Stuart says he understands why the mayor is bringing the ordinance back.

"There are people that won't even move for people that are coming down the sidewalk and I think that's messed up," Stuart said. "Little kids being pushed in strollers and people will just leave their crap all over the place. If I was a parent and a regular part of society I'd be pissed too if I had to walk in the road."

When asked why he was still living in the streets and not in a bed at the Trent shelter, Stuart had this to say.

"I just don't like being around that many people because they are slobs," Stuart said. "So many of the homeless are just slobs and they are gross."

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HEADLINE	09/07 Europe: Putin gas power weakening
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/07/world/europe/eu-russia-putin-gas.html
GIST	<p>BERLIN — Not long after Russian forces invaded Ukraine, another mobilization began. European energy ministers and diplomats started jetting across the world and inking energy deals — racing to prepare for a rough winter should Russia choose to cut off its cheap gas in retaliation for Western sanctions.</p> <p>Since then, President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia has fiddled with the gas tap to Europe repeatedly. Through Gazprom, the Kremlin-controlled gas monopoly, Russia has vastly reduced supplies or suspended them for days at a time — until last week, when it announced that it would indefinitely halt flows through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline that supplies Germany, and through it, much of Europe.</p> <p>Yet when the blow finally came, it provoked more ridicule than outrage among European leaders, who say that by now they would expect nothing less from Mr. Putin and that they have accepted that the era of cheap Russian gas is over, unimaginable as that might have seemed just months ago.</p> <p>In some corners, even as Europe's leaders scramble to blunt the blow from lower gas supplies and higher prices, there is a growing sense that perhaps Russia's weaponizing of gas exports is a strategy of diminishing returns — and that Mr. Putin may have overplayed his hand.</p> <p>"It would have been surprising the other way around," Robert Habeck, Germany's economy minister, said this week of Russia's announcement that Nord Stream 1 would remain shut. "The only thing from Russia that is reliable is the lies."</p> <p>Even the markets seemed to take the latest disruption in stride. After rising 5 percent on the heels of Gazprom's announcement, prices are now lower than they were at the start of last week.</p> <p>That does not mean that European nations are not feeling the pain, or have skirted the risk that the energy crunch could sow social unrest, fracturing their unity against the Kremlin this winter. But a lot of the</p>

damage has already been done, with gas prices several times above anything that would be considered normal and pressure mounting on consumers and businesses.

The question remains, then, of just how successful the hard pivot from Russian energy actually is — whether Europe has lined up enough new sources, whether its stockpiles can get it through the winter, whether conservation efforts can make a difference and whether governments can help shield consumers from rising prices.

Russian officials are watching and waiting for what they believe is the inevitable collapse of European resolve as the economic pain bites.

“I think that the coming winter will show how real their belief is in the possibility of refusing Russian gas,” the Russian energy minister, Nikolai Shulginov, said in an interview with the Russian state-run news agency Tass. “This will be a completely new life for the Europeans. I think that, most likely, they will not be able to refuse.”

Russian state news outlets are full of reports of protests in Europe. Italians, Russian state media reported, are being told to boil their pasta for just two minutes before turning off the heat, while Germans are forgoing showers.

The message: Sooner or later, the Europeans’ unity against Russia will crumble under the weight of high gas prices, while Russia’s standing has been elevated.

“We have not lost anything and will not lose anything,” Mr. Putin said on Wednesday.

But increasingly, Europe’s leaders are signaling that, having spent months preparing for this moment, they are ready for the showdown.

“Now our work is paying off!” the European Commission president, Ursula von der Leyen, said on Wednesday in Brussels. “At the beginning of the war, Russia’s pipeline gas was 40 percent of all imported gas. Today it is now down to only 9 percent of our gas imports.”

That is because European leaders — especially those from Italy and Germany, which rely most on Russian energy — have crisscrossed the globe. From Algeria to Qatar, Senegal, Congo and Canada, they have been negotiating deals to replace Russian supplies.

Germany has also leaned heavily on Norway and the Netherlands, which agreed to extend the life of its biggest gas field to combat the energy crisis.

As a result, Germany’s dependency on cheap Russian gas — once more than half its overall gas imports — decreased to less than 10 percent in August.

In Italy, consumption from Moscow has dropped to 23 percent from 40 percent.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz of Germany and other European leaders are defiantly claiming the end of an era. For decades, dating to the days of the Soviet Union, Moscow had insisted to Germany and others that it was a reliable energy partner, no matter the political context. But now, European leaders say, Mr. Putin has shattered that understanding.

“Something that held true throughout the Cold War no longer applies,” Mr. Scholz said last weekend. “Russia is no longer a reliable energy supplier. That is part of the new reality.”

That new reality, perhaps, should not have come as such a shock. Mr. Putin’s gas brinkmanship dates to 2004, when Gazprom [cut deliveries to Belarus](#), in a battle for control of a transit pipeline into Western Europe.

In 2009, as Ukraine sought NATO membership under a pro-Western president, Mr. Putin ordered a sharp reduction in gas flows through the country; after Ukraine elected a pro-Russian president a year later, the Kremlin rewarded him with [a 30 percent cut in natural gas prices](#).

And even before Russia invaded Ukraine, it reduced exports in the summer of 2021, and did not refill Gazprom-owned storage sites in Europe.

Sergey Vakulenko, an analyst in Bonn, Germany, who worked for years in Russia's energy industry, said that over the last two decades Russian officials had seen the geopolitical power that the United States derived from its influence over the global financial system, and sought to harness Russia's status as a major energy exporter in a similar way.

"There was a great desire, as a superpower, to have something similar," he said. "There was the feeling that oil and gas was the answer."

Yet Russia's cuts in gas exports to Europe since its invasion of Ukraine are of a different order of magnitude. "This is now just blackmail," said Mikhail Krutikhin, a Russian energy analyst. "We haven't seen it on this scale before."

In going so far, Mr. Putin has also invited greater risks. An internal Russian government economic forecast described this week by Bloomberg News estimated that a full cutoff of gas to Europe would cost as much as \$6.6 billion in lost tax revenues.

But with Gazprom netting a record profit of \$41.75 billion in the first half of the year — \$10 billion of which it passed on to the Kremlin — that is a cost Mr. Putin has calculated to be acceptable.

For Russia, oil is the biggest revenue source, and Mr. Putin may be keen to use gas as a political weapon while he can, said Thomas O'Donnell, an energy expert at the Hertie School, a public policy school in Berlin.

"This is where he's got his biggest leverage to cause the most trouble in the European Union," Mr. O'Donnell said. He added, "It's a lever that he knows he's going to lose in a year — or even maybe after this winter."

And a lot may depend on the severity of the winter.

Even if liquid natural gas imports to Europe from other sources continue at their record high rate, a study released this week by the research institute Bruegel estimated that a complete stop to Russian supplies would require all of Europe to cut its consumption by 15 percent.

European nations that used to rely on Russian gas imports for big chunks of their domestic energy production have been racing to fill gas storage facilities. Germany's are now at 86 percent capacity, Italy's at almost 84 percent.

In Germany, large industry players have so far managed to drop their consumption by around 20 percent. A similar amount would have to be shaved off household usage, according to German energy and economy ministry models, should Russian gas remain shut off. If households don't cut back, Germany's gas regulator has repeatedly warned, the option could be rationing.

Europe is aiming to have enough liquid natural gas solutions in place by next year. Germany recently signed a deal for a fifth floating L.N.G. terminal, while terminals in Belgium, France and the Netherlands are fully booked.

The key to surviving this winter in the face of a Nord Stream shutdown will be how well European states work together.

	<p>So far, only Hungary has signed a deal for additional supplies with Gazprom.</p> <p>France and Germany, in contrast, agreed this week that Paris would send any excess gas to Germany, where it is badly needed, and in return Berlin promised to send its extra electricity.</p> <p>The tricky issue will be what happens should more critical German industry have to cut back, and voters begin to insist supplies not be diverted to neighbors — like the Czech Republic, where 70,000 people already came out in protest of soaring prices. It is a challenge many European leaders may face this winter, warned Annalena Baerbock, Germany’s foreign minister.</p> <p>“That will be the central question that will really put us to the test in the coming months,” Ms. Baerbock said, at a meeting of German ambassadors in Berlin this week. “Will we be able to secure our energy supply for all people in Europe together in solidarity, or not?”</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Eatonville teachers officially go on strike
SOURCE	https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/education/article265441396.html
GIST	<p>Teachers in Eatonville officially went on strike Wednesday after a last-minute round of bargaining with the school district failed to bring the two sides together on a new contract, delaying the first day of school for some 1,800 students.</p> <p>Michael Sniezak is president of the Eatonville Education Association, which represents roughly 110 teachers and support staff. Sniezak said that negotiations Tuesday did not move the needle on resolving the labor group’s concerns over classroom size, contract length or pay, among other issues that have been the subject of bargaining since June.</p> <p>“The truth is we aren’t seeing progress,” Sniezak said by phone Wednesday. “It’s been very little back and forth. It’s really been a lot of stalemate.”</p> <p>The union had authorized a strike on Aug. 30 if an agreement remained elusive by Wednesday, the day when students were supposed to return from summer vacation in the rural town about 31 driving miles southeast of Tacoma.</p> <p>Eatonville, which has five schools including a high school, has an estimated population of 2,800 people, according to the 2020 U.S. Census.</p> <p>In a message Tuesday notifying students’ families of the failed negotiations and looming strike, the Eatonville School District said that reaching an agreement is its highest priority.</p> <p>“We appreciate your patience and understanding during this difficult time and look forward to welcoming our students and staff back to school as soon as possible,” the message read.</p> <p>The district’s five schools will be closed through the duration of the strike. While teachers picketed at two school sites on Wednesday, the labor union and school district were scheduled to participate in six hours of continued talks through a mediator later in the day.</p> <p>The work stoppage is the lone such labor dispute in Pierce County, but it comes as teachers in Seattle also went on strike Wednesday and as striking teachers in Kent reached a tentative agreement, according to multiple media reports.</p> <p>In Eatonville, any school days missed as a result of the strike will be made up in a manner to be negotiated in settlement talks.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Kent teachers strike ends; contract ratified
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SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/kent-teachers-strike-could-end-soon-as-union-reaches-tentative-deal/
GIST	<p>After a strike forced more than a week's delay to the start of classes in the Kent School District, the Kent Education Association ratified a contract late Wednesday. Most students will begin heading to school Thursday.</p> <p>Details of the contract were not made immediately available Wednesday night.</p> <p>Classes for most of the district's roughly 25,000 students will begin Thursday, but not all. This is the schedule released Wednesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 1-12 begin Thursday. • Kindergarten begins Tuesday. • Meridian Preschool, Park Orchard Preschool, and Early Childhood Special Education Preschool begin Tuesday. <p>Parents with children in the following programs should contact the school beginning Thursday for schedule updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kentridge High School daycare • Kentwood High School daycare • Kent Youth and Family Services Head Start Program • DCYF Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program <p>Middle school athletics will begin Friday.</p> <p>The Kent school year was to begin Aug. 25, but as is happening with the Seattle Public Schools strike that began Wednesday, kids had to wait.</p> <p>The district said it will need to make up the nine missed days throughout the school year and a revised calendar will be published once it is finalized.</p> <p>The Kent deal reached late Wednesday followed bargaining sessions Labor Day and Tuesday, with a tentative agreement announced Wednesday morning. The union's vote Wednesday night to ratify means the School Board will now get the package for formal approval.</p> <p>Ahead of the Kent Education Association meeting Wednesday evening, union Vice President Layla Jones said she had "full faith" in the collective bargaining team that worked to find common ground with the district. "I really do trust that what comes back with the bargaining team is going to be something that is beneficial for our membership," she said.</p> <p>Last weekend, the American Federation of Teachers Union of Washington, representing the district's custodians, maintenance workers and other employees, voted to strike if the terms of its contract cannot be met, according to the Kent Reporter.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Seattle teachers, aides on picket line
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/striking-seattle-teachers-aides-explain-why-they-are-on-the-picket-line/
GIST	<p>For nearly 27 years, Jacqueline Hardy has been a paraeducator in Seattle Public Schools. During that time she hasn't been able to afford to live in Seattle — where she was born and raised — and has worked two jobs to pay her bills.</p> <p>Wednesday was to be the first day of the 2022 school year, but instead, Hardy was one of the thousands of Seattle Education Association members on strike.</p>

Neither side has explained why they haven't reached an agreement. But they're still at the bargaining table, and a mediator is assisting.

On Wednesday, striking educators spelled out their frustrations on the picket line, describing the challenges of teaching at a time when many children have fallen behind academically and are struggling with emotional and behavioral issues.

For paraeducators – often known as instruction assistants – the problem is pay. “We need a huge pay raise — like we're barely getting by,” said Rhonda Gonzales, an instructional assistant at Lafayette Elementary School.

In Seattle, a paraeducator's base pay starts at about \$19 an hour, and tops out at \$40 an hour. That starting pay is lower than nearby districts. At Northshore School District, paraeducator base pay starts at about \$27 an hour. Bellevue pays \$22 to start, Lake Washington pays \$20 and Highline pays \$22.

In general education classes, instructional assistants not only help special education students, they help everyone else in the room, said Julie Clark, an instructional assistant for 15 years.

When Jane Addams Middle School first opened in 2014, Clark was one of its first instructional assistants. None of the others are still there – they've either moved on to a different role, began working at a different school district in the same role or left the field entirely, Clark said.

Union officials haven't said how big of a pay increase they're seeking for paraeducators and teachers, but since 2018 most teachers have seen a substantial salary bump. Under the current contract, the salary range for Seattle is on par with surrounding school districts, but slightly less than Highline, Northshore, and Lake Washington.

Beginner teachers make about \$63,000, and salaries top out at \$123,500 for a teacher with a Ph.D. Northshore, by contrast, starts at \$68,000 and tops out at nearly \$131,000.

One sticking point, at least for some: The union is asking for smaller teacher-to-student ratios in the special education and multilingual programs, but the district wants to get rid of student-to-teacher ratios altogether and implement a “workload calculator,” said Steven Miller, an International Baccalaureate coordinator at Rainier Beach High School.

Miller said it's not clear what a workload calculator would mean; the language in district proposals is vague. In effect, the district is asking the teachers to trust them, and “That faith just isn't here,” he said.

School district officials said Wednesday that negotiations are continuing and they are certain the Seattle Education Association, also known as SEA, and the district can come to an agreement. Families will be updated each day at 3 p.m., the district said.

Kevin Hiller, a special education teacher at Rainier Beach for about seven years, called the proposal to remove teacher-to-student ratios in special education “terrifying.” He taught in Chicago, and when administrators upped the ratios, he said, the classrooms became chaotic, it was difficult to meet individualized education program goals, and teachers and families were frustrated.

SEA and the district also want students receiving special education services to be more fully integrated into general education classrooms. But in order to do that, Hiller said, teachers need more support staff.

“Full inclusion is probably the way to go, but ... you have to allocate appropriate resources. It has to be rolled out over time,” Hiller said. “They need to talk to teachers about best practices instead of just saying things and then forcing things to happen that we know will be a train wreck.”

Extra supports are also needed for students who are multilingual or learning English, teachers said. Rachel Pendergast, a second and third grade teacher at Dearborn Park International Elementary School, said three

families arrived at school Wednesday not knowing it was canceled because of the strike. All of the students were English learners.

Caseloads were high the past school year, said Maridith Dollente, an English-language learner instructional aide at Cleveland High School, and many students were still struggling with learning face-to-face.

Dollente said she had about 75% of the support she needed the past school year. "Sometimes there would be instances that were not manageable because some of them (students) would shout out, get out of their seat, move around too much and while the teacher is teaching it's very, very disruptive."

The Seattle Student Union, a group of student activists, released a statement in support of the striking educators, calling the union demands "the foundation of what is needed to ensure a strong district for years to come, and they ensure that every student and staff member has the support they need to succeed."

Eleven students joined Lincoln High School educators on the picket line Wednesday morning and afternoon. "I don't think it's unreasonable what they are asking for," said Chetan Soni, a junior at Lincoln this year and co-founder of the Seattle Student Union. "It's not just about pay increases, it's about student success and student education."

Soni said educators are fighting for student safety, which parallels what the Seattle Student Union was advocating for all last year. "We're trying to repay the favors because solidarity is a verb and how teachers were there for us we can be there for teachers."

Support for teachers was running strong among parents, despite the impact on their families.

Hedwight Amoda said her 4th and 6th grade sons were disappointed to see school canceled. Her youngest had gone to an open house at Wing Luke Elementary on Tuesday, seen its beautifully renovated campus and met his teacher. Her older one was a bit nervous to start middle school, but seemed ready to face the challenge after she gave him a pep talk.

"The first day back to school is so important," said Amoda, a social worker, after dropping her kids off at the Boys & Girls Club of America in the Rainier Valley, which because of the strike was running an all-day program. "They are really taking that away from kids."

"I'm not blaming the teachers or the union," she quickly added. She said she didn't know exactly what they were asking for, but was sure it was important if they were willing to see school canceled.

Karen Rains, in contrast, said she had gone onto the union website and read every word of what teachers are asking for. "I think they deserve everything and more," said the West Seattle mom, who has an 8th grader and two high schoolers.

Particularly important to her, she said, are teacher and staff concerns about support for special education students. One of her children is such a student and his individualized educational plan calls for him to have an aide in academic classes.

Yet last week, she said a school counselor called to tell her there weren't enough aides for him to have one in every class and asked her to choose the most important. She picked English Language Arts.

Fellow West Seattle mom Jen Boyer, a writer who got up at 4 a.m. Wednesday so she could finish work early and do something with her 8th and 9th graders, noted the strike was coming on top of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Her kids felt isolated. Teachers burnt out. Seattle Public Schools, she said, did a poor job of supporting both, feeding Boyer's distrust of the district and current support for the union.

	<p>A few Beacon Hill International Elementary parents showed their support in visible ways. Beth Somerfield opened her nearby house to marchers who needed to use the bathroom. Signs with arrows led the way, and her daughter and several peers kept track of how many people had come: 53 by midmorning.</p> <p>Somerfield, who works from home for a consulting firm, said she was expecting to be able to focus more on work this week with school starting, but wasn't resentful about the turn of events.</p> <p>"I come from a family of teachers," Somerfield said. "I know how hard they work."</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Monkeypox drops, racial disparities grow
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/monkeypox-cases-dropping-but-racial-disparities-growing/
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House said Wednesday it's optimistic about a decline in monkeypox cases and an uptick in vaccinations against the infectious virus, despite worsening racial disparities in reported cases.</p> <p>Promising to ramp up vaccination offerings at LGBTQ Pride festivals around the country in the coming weeks, Dr. Demetre Daskalakis, the deputy coordinator of the White House national monkeypox response, said more than 460,000 doses have been given.</p> <p>An end to the virus' spread, however, is not in sight.</p> <p>"Our goal is to control this outbreak in the U.S.," Daskalakis said. "We're seeing strong progress, really, getting shots into arms. Now that supply is less of an issue, we need to make sure we focus on maintaining demand."</p> <p>The U.S. leads the world with infections — as of Wednesday, 21,274 cases had been reported — with men accounting for about 98% of cases and men who said they had recent sexual contact with other men about 93% of cases.</p> <p>Monkeypox, which can cause a rash, fever, body aches and chills, is spread through close skin-to-skin contact and prolonged exposure to respiratory droplets. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended that men or transgender people who have had multiple male sex partners consider vaccination.</p> <p>The number of infections is slowing after hitting a high of 870 cases in a single day on Aug. 22. But the decline has revealed deepening racial divides.</p> <p>While cases in white men have dropped in recent weeks, Black people are making up a growing percentage of infections — nearly 38% during the final week of August, according to the latest data available. In the early weeks of the monkeypox outbreak, Black people made up less than a quarter of reported cases.</p> <p>Latinos are also disproportionately infected, making up roughly a third of infections.</p> <p>That trend means that public health messaging and vaccines are not effectively reaching those communities, said Dr. Amesh Adalja, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security.</p> <p>"That tells you there needs to be a major recalibration in your interventions," Adalja said. "It's not as impactful as it should be."</p> <p>The Biden administration has struggled since the beginning with its response to the outbreak when it was first identified in May. A million doses of the vaccine were awaiting use in the strategic national stockpile, but the U.S. only had 2,000 of those on hand. Shipping and regulatory delays forced a monthslong wait for most of the remaining supply, as men lined up for hours outside clinics in major cities hoping to get the shot.</p>

	<p>White House officials said Wednesday they’ve rebounded from some of those early missteps, pointing to a recent decline in cases.</p> <p>Daskalakis said the Biden administration worked to get vaccines directly into the hands of local organizations with ties to the LGBTQ community to increase uptake in Black and Latino communities. He pointed to efforts at recent Pride celebrations in Atlanta and New Orleans as evidence.</p> <p>“Thousands of individuals are getting the protection against monkeypox that they may not have otherwise,” Daskalakis said. “These events demonstrate our strategy is working.”</p> <p>In Louisville, Kentucky, 33-year-old Spencer Jenkins isn’t so sure.</p> <p>Jenkins spent weeks this summer trying to get a vaccine by signing up for long waitlists in cities hours away, including Washington and Chicago. He got lucky when his doctor in Louisville was one of a few providers in the city to get doses of the shot early last month.</p> <p>“You’d think they’d want to get the vaccines to everybody because it’s preventive,” he said. “All of the work came down on the queer people trying to get the vaccine.”</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 China ‘zero Covid’ bind: no easy way out
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/07/world/asia/china-covid-lockdown.html
GIST	<p>Tens of millions of Chinese confined at home, schools closed, businesses in limbo and whole cities at a standstill. Once again, China is locking down enormous parts of society, trying to completely eradicate COVID in a campaign that grows more anomalous by the day as the rest of the world learns to live with the coronavirus.</p> <p>But even as the costs of China’s zero-COVID strategy are mounting, Beijing faces a stark reality: It has backed itself into a corner. Three years of its uncompromising, heavy-handed approach of imposing lockdowns, quarantines and mass testing to isolate infections have left it little room, at least in the short term, to change course.</p> <p>China’s leader, Xi Jinping, has made clear that zero COVID is as much an ideological undertaking as a public health one. He has tied support for the policy to support for the Communist Party and hailed its execution as proof of China’s edge over Western democracies. He has prioritized nationalism over the guidance of scientists. Any reversal or adjustment would seem to undercut his vision, especially before a major Communist Party meeting next month where Xi is all but assured to extend his rule.</p> <p>The emphasis on politics has created practical problems. Beijing has refused to approve foreign vaccines, opting instead to provide only less-effective, homegrown ones to its 1.4 billion people. The government has pushed propaganda depicting the virus as having devastated Western countries, feeding widespread stigma and a fear of infections even among the young and healthy. It has silenced voices seeking to offer a different approach, labeling them traitors.</p> <p>Buoyed by its early success at containment, the party was slow at first to encourage vaccination, leaving many older Chinese vulnerable. Since few Chinese have natural immunity from the virus, the risks of loosening controls are potentially even higher.</p> <p>“That sort of makes the zero-COVID policy self-sustaining,” said Yanzhong Huang, a senior fellow for global health at the Council on Foreign Relations.</p> <p>At least 65 million Chinese are currently under some form of lockdown, according to a tally by Chinese media, including the southwestern city of Chengdu, home to 21 million people. In cities that are not battling outbreaks, quashing COVID still dictates the rhythms of daily life. Residents line up for</p>

mandatory, regular testing and obsessively monitor their health codes, digital markers that dictate whether they can move freely.

Many Chinese have found ways to cope, even if reluctantly: putting in longer hours to scrape up more money, cutting back on spending. Complaints about a shortage of medical care or food often emerge, but some residents say they support the overarching goal.

“Who can get used to this?” said Zhang Lang, a grocery store owner in the southwestern city of Guiyang, who has been under lockdown for three days. “But there’s no choice,” he said. “The epidemic is coming. Do you want what happened in America to happen here?”

Still, the question is how long China’s calculus will remain in favor of the current approach. Youth unemployment is soaring, small businesses are collapsing, and overseas companies are shifting their supply chains elsewhere. A sustained slowdown would undermine the promise of economic growth, long the central pillar of the party’s legitimacy.

“The social and economic cost will continue to increase. So I think ultimately, they’re going to reach a point where the cost exceeds the benefits,” Huang said. But, he added, “it just might be farther off.”

For now, officials are sticking closely to the status quo, imposing the most extensive lockdowns in months to contain a series of new outbreaks.

Authorities in Guiyang, population 6 million, ordered a partial lockdown this week after detecting several hundred cases in recent days. In Shanghai, where one asymptomatic infection was announced Tuesday, officials imposed a one-week lockdown on a hotel where the patient had stayed and urged all residents not to leave the city during a public holiday this weekend.

Because of the high political stakes, local governments are likely to err on the side of overreaction to contain outbreaks, said Chen Xi, an associate professor of public health at Yale University. Scores of city officials have been fired or otherwise punished after cases emerged in their jurisdictions. The party meeting on Oct. 16 is adding to the pressure on officials.

“Given the sensitive timing before the party congress, local governments are afraid of making any mistakes, making the central government’s policies unnecessarily more stringent,” Chen said. China’s pursuit of zero COVID has often been single-minded, overriding all other concerns. Hospitals trying to avoid the risk of infection have turned away patients in dire need of care. Enforcers of lockdowns have barged into people’s homes or killed pets left behind by quarantined owners. When a 6.8-magnitude earthquake struck Luding County in Sichuan province Monday, residents in the locked-down city of Chengdu, the provincial capital, were blocked from leaving their homes even as buildings shook, according to widely circulated posts on social media.

After a public outcry, Chengdu health officials clarified that physical safety was the top priority in the case of natural disasters.

The challenge for China is that its own policies have made it harder to ease restrictions. While other countries prioritized vaccinating the elderly, China made older residents among the last to be eligible, citing concerns about side effects. And it never introduced vaccine passes, perhaps sensitive to public skepticism of its own vaccines.

In late July, about 67% of people age 60 and older had received a third shot, compared to 72% of the entire population. Medical experts have warned that an uncontrolled outbreak could lead to high numbers of deaths among the elderly, as occurred during a wave this spring in Hong Kong, which also suffered from low vaccination rates.

But those considerations are entangled with politics, too. China has refused to approve Western mRNA vaccines, though it has struggled to produce its own; its homegrown, inactivated vaccines have proved less clinically effective.

Cai Xia, a retired professor at the Communist Party's top academy, attributed China's inflexible approach to Xi's desire for total control. In an essay published Wednesday in Foreign Affairs, Cai, who now lives in the United States, said Xi had overruled health experts throughout the pandemic.

"A leader more open to influence or subject to greater checks would not likely have implemented such a draconian policy, or at least would have corrected course once its costs and unpopularity became evident," she wrote, in reference to this spring's lockdown in Shanghai, which led many residents to report shortages of food and medical care. "But for Xi, backtracking would have been an unthinkable admission of error." There may come a point at which the economic consequences of zero COVID force Beijing to consider a reset.

Youth unemployment has reached a record 20%, according to official statistics in August. The nearly three dozen Chinese cities under some form of lockdown represent one-third of China's entire economic output, according to Hao Hong, the chief economist and a partner at Grow Investment Management in Hong Kong.

Survival is top of mind for business owners like Lu Wei, 50, who runs a restaurant in Daqing, in northeastern China. She and her husband have been sealed at home for three weeks, and she worries about how she will pay rent. She is relying on the government for deliveries of fresh vegetables and drawing from her store of pickled vegetables when they don't arrive.

But Lu said she was used to measures such as daily testing and believed they could keep her safe. She said she did not have any specific changes she would like to see to COVID policies, other than perhaps the flexibility to order online food deliveries.

"I just hope we can achieve zero as soon as possible," she said.

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HEADLINE	09/08 Heavy rain after deadly China quake
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/heavy-rain-after-deadly-china-quake-complicates-recovery/
GIST	<p>BEIJING (AP) — Heavy rains are complicating earthquake recovery efforts in southwestern China, where the death toll from Monday's disaster has risen to 82.</p> <p>More than 20,000 people have been moved to temporary shelters amid the threat of landslides and buildings collapsing in the mountainous region of Sichuan province, state media reported Thursday. The rains are expected to last at least through Friday.</p> <p>Another 35 people are missing and 270 have been hospitalized with injuries from the magnitude 6.8 quake that leveled building and sent boulders tumbling onto roads in Sichuan's Ganze Tibetan Autonomous Region and neighboring Ya'an city, the reports said.</p> <p>Buildings were also shaken in the provincial capital of Chengdu, where 21 million people are among the 65 million Chinese under a strict COVID-19 lockdown confining them to their homes and residential compounds.</p> <p>Following the quake, police and health workers in Chengdu refused to allow anxious residents outside, adding to public frustration over the government's strict zero-COVID policy mandating lockdowns, quarantines and other restrictions, even while the rest of the world has largely reopened.</p> <p>Despite the impact on the economy and public sentiment, the policy has become closely identified with president and Communist Party leader Xi Jinping in what has been called a politicization of health care.</p>

	<p>The government is also discouraging domestic travel during the mid-autumn festival on Saturday and the weeklong national holiday at the start of October.</p> <p>Virus outbreaks have been reported in 103 cities, the highest since the early days of the pandemic in early 2020.</p> <p>Monday's quake was centered in a mountainous area of Luding county, which sits on the edge of the Tibetan Plateau roughly 200 kilometers (125 miles) from Chengdu.</p> <p>Friction between tectonic plates in the region frequently cause earthquakes, including China's deadliest in recent years, a 7.9 magnitude temblor in 2008 that killed nearly 90,000 people in Sichuan.</p> <p>That quake devastated towns, schools and rural communities outside Chengdu, leading to a years-long effort to rebuild with more resilient materials.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Search for downed floatplane continues
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/floatplane-crash-whidbey-island-puget-sound/281-f4338c31-01c5-437c-8e25-122e0c40543b
GIST	<p>WHIDBEY ISLAND STATION, Wash. — The NTSB is now requesting help from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in locating a downed floatplane that crashed into the Puget Sound near Whidbey Island last weekend.</p> <p>The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) was assisting with the search but called it off because their sonar equipment is ill-suited for the location, an NTSB spokesperson said.</p> <p>The WDFW's equipment is intended to search in tightly focused areas but the NTSB needs the capability to search over a more expansive zone.</p> <p>Data and witness reports indicated the floatplane took a nosedive before plummeting into Mutiny Bay on Sunday, Sept. 4, with 10 people on board. All nine passengers and the pilot are presumed dead.</p> <p>The plane departed from Friday Harbor and was headed for the Renton Municipal Airport in a scheduled commuter flight.</p> <p>The Island County dispatch center was inundated with 911 calls, claiming a plane had fallen out of the sky.</p> <p>"Everything about the call was very different," said Terry Ney, Deputy Chief of Operations for the South Whidbey Fire EMS.</p> <p>"We go into it assuming it's going to be a rescue, but of course, we found out differently," said Ney. He and his crew were some of the first on the water Sunday afternoon.</p> <p>On Sunday, one passenger was recovered along with plane parts. The NTSB said in a statement to KING 5 that foam fragments, a seat cushion, seat belt, dispatch paperwork, flooring structure and personal items have also been found.</p> <p>Water in the area where the plane crashed can be hundreds of feet deep. Ney said his crew clocked depths between 100 to 200 feet during Sunday's recovery. The NTSB says their search area is between 100 to 300 feet deep.</p> <p>"We don't know the condition of the aircraft, it's a challenge when you're working in water of that depth," said Tom Chapman with the NTSB.</p>

	<p>The depth and drop-offs are one reason Ney said they don't have a dive team.</p> <p>"It requires very specialized equipment to dive 150 to 200 feet. It involves specialized gases, specialized training, and equipment. There are just a few commercial dive companies that do offer that service," said Ney.</p> <p>Add in the tides and current, the water can move fast.</p> <p>"A three-knot current is like a 3.5 mile per hour current, it's a huge volume of water moving that fast, so it can easily move something the size of an airplane," said Ney.</p> <p>The search for this floatplane continues, despite the rough waters they face.</p> <p>"It's a challenging place to work," said Ney.</p> <p>The NTSB says a normal investigation will take between 18 and 24 months, but they aren't certain how long this will take as they haven't located the plane yet. A spokesperson said they are "confident" the plane will be located.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Seattle public schools enrollment dropping
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/education/parents-seattle-public-schools-enrollment-impact-quality-education/281-9c9700b7-0133-4b72-bb95-761452b22fb6
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Across the U.S. the pandemic brought the largest single-year drop in school enrollment since World War II and in Seattle, data shows that public schools will continue to see their numbers fall in coming years.</p> <p>In the 2019-2020 school year there were 53,630 students. The 2020-2021 school year saw 52,381 students, that's 1,200 less than the previous year.</p> <p>Predictions for the next several years show this drop as a trend.</p> <p>Seattle Public Schools (SPS) enrollment projections:</p> <p>2022-23: 49,550 2023-24: 48,498 2024-25: 47,813 2025-26: 46,910</p> <p>According to data from the district's budget meeting the enrollment rate is predicted to drop by several hundred to about a thousand each year until 2026.</p> <p>Seattle Public Schools' enrollment drop can be attributed to families moving away. Also, nationwide there's a declining birthrate.</p> <p>"Money from the state to the schools is based on enrollment numbers, and there's been a decline," explained Cherylynne Crowther, president of the Seattle Special Education PTSA.</p> <p>Funding is based on enrollment. When there are fewer students, less money from the state is allocated to the district.</p> <p>That is bad news for parents, like Crowther, who feel the district is already underfunded.</p> <p>Crowther's son Max was born with physical and intellectual disabilities.</p>

"He needs specially designed instruction, modified curriculum, those types of things. But we're also talking about students who have dyslexia, who have ADHD, who have anxiety, who have autism," Crowther said.

Seattle Public Schools sent this statement to KING 5:

"At its regular school board meeting on Wednesday, July 6, 2022, the Board of Directors of Seattle Public Schools voted to approve a \$1.6 billion budget for the 2022-23 school year."

This budget aligns with SPS priorities to fully meet the academic and social-emotional needs of students, particularly those furthest away from educational justice. The budget also reflects the district's commitment to fiscal responsibility within the context of declining enrollment.

The enrollment decline was anticipated because of community-wide demographic shifts, but the unexpected impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic likely contributed to a sharper decrease than planned by the district.

However, it is important to note that shifts in enrollment do occur on an annual basis and the district routinely strategizes to prioritize providing the best possible education for students. In general, decreases in funding may necessitate shifting staff in some schools.

Part of SPS's solution is to shift staff around.

Crowther said special education is already understaffed and under-resourced and shifting staff causes extra stress on a system that's already near a breaking point, especially after the challenges COVID-19 brought to education.

"Education for students with disabilities was never done right," Crowther said, "We really need inclusion in every school, and we need the support, we need the funding. The state needs to provide the funding to make sure that students like my son, and students like you, they know how to be in the classroom, and everybody does better."

While some parents who have the resources chose to move their children to private schools or chose to homeschool, Crowther said that is not always an option for children with disabilities.

"It's very challenging to find alternatives to public school for special education. There aren't necessarily programs that are put together in private schools or in or homeschooling," Crowther said.

Education for children with special needs is federally protected under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

But Crowther said the burden is still on parents to make sure their child's education is meeting their individual needs.

"So, what happens is when they're out of legal compliance? Parents have to take some sort of an action, or kids are not getting the education that they are legally entitled to," Crowther said.

Crowther acknowledges the community needs to do more to support education.

"Every single student, every single student in Seattle Public Schools is the responsibility of our community. It's not problem-solving to cut budgets in education. That is kind of such a core component. Education is where you grow, and you and you build resilience and you create community, and we're not there," Crowther said.

Crowther said she supports changes in legislation to make sure education budgets are protected.

	<p>“At a community level, at a state level, at a federal level, we need to recognize that supporting education is one of the most critical actions we can take as citizens and as voters,” Crowther explained, “Change the funding, get the money, stop looking at enrollment numbers. What do we need to change in order to be able to actually do right with school and education for kids with special education needs, students with disabilities, all the kids.”</p> <p>KING 5 asked Seattle Public Schools for an on-camera interview for this story and was told it may provide one once official student enrollment rates are released for the 2022-2023 school year.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Gallup: half of workers ‘quiet quitting’
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/quiet-quitting-half-of-american-workers-gallup/
GIST	<p>An employment trend known as "quiet quitting" — clocking in and doing the bare minimum at work — isn't a niche phenomenon, according to Gallup. with the polling organization finding that more than half of American workers routinely mail it in on the job.</p> <p>Quiet quitting doesn't mean that a worker has left her job, but instead describes a number of general behaviors including setting boundaries and declining to work in the evenings or weekends.</p> <p>About half of workers are "not engaged," which means they are doing the minimum required and are psychologically detached from their jobs, according to the survey. While that share isn't all that different from past years, Gallup found there's been a recent jump in "actively disengaged" workers, or people who are loudly dissatisfied with work and taking to TikTok and other social media apps to complain about their job.</p> <p>With the pandemic adding stress to the workplace, the share of actively disengaged workers has jumped to 18% in 2022 from 14% in 2020, Gallup found. At the same time, employee engagement is waning, with only 32% of workers describing themselves as involved and enthusiastic at work, down from 36% in 2020.</p> <p>The emergence of quiet quitting is partly a byproduct of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused a massive upheaval in the labor market and in society at large. Millions of workers shifted to remote work, while others lost their jobs during the initial lockdowns. More fundamentally, the crisis also spurred some Americans to question their very relationship to work.</p> <p>"People are feeling less connected"</p> <p>Now that companies are returning to offices or instituting hybrid schedules, some workers feel disconnected from those decisions and may not feel their employers care about them.</p> <p>"There is something going on right now that says there has been a deterioration of the relationship between employee and employer, and that is contributing to it," Jim Harter, chief scientist for Gallup's workplace management practice, told CBS MoneyWatch. "That is troubling to me, that people are feeling less connected to their organizations."</p> <p>One surprise finding is that managers are also quiet quitting in greater numbers, according to Gallup's findings. Only about 1 in 3 managers describe themselves as emotionally or psychologically engaged at work, with this group experiencing one of the biggest drops in engagement in its most recent survey.</p> <p>That could spell more trouble ahead given that such managers can create a "cascade" of quiet quitting among their direct reports, Harter said. Managers have had their own pandemic-related stresses, which could explain the rise in disengagement, he said.</p> <p>"The role is more complex now because of all these hybrid and remote work situations, and they have to manage in different ways," he noted.</p>

Quiet quitting has some very real negative outcomes for businesses that fail to engage their workers, according to Gallup. For one, most workers who are disengaged are already looking for a new job, the survey found.

"If you have a high percentage of disengaged workers, there are numerous outcomes we've documented that are big risks. You'll lose more people to the competition — that's a big one right now with the [tight] labor market. And the other is you will have a less efficient workforce and lower productivity overall," Harter said.

And the rise in the number of workers quitting, one facet of the so-called Great Resignation, was concurrent with a drop in engagement that started late last year, Gallup found.

How to combat quiet quitting

Workers can slip into quiet quitting when they don't know what's expected of them at work, when their employers don't give them an opportunity to learn and grow, and if they feel disconnected from the company's mission, according to Gallup.

"If organizations don't get on top of it, this increased separation between employee and employer, where people don't feel as loyal to their organization, then it will continue," Harter said.

Managers can combat quiet quitting by checking in with their employees via one "meaningful" discussion each week to set goals and provide feedback so that managers can get to know their employees' work-life situation, Harter said.

For instance, half of workers want a clear boundary between their personal and professional lives, while the other half want a more blended situation, he noted. Managers should get a grasp of what their employees prefer and help them achieve the balance that works for them. It's also harder for competitors to lure workers away if they feel engaged at their current job, Gallup's research has found.

"One side note is that if people are engaged they require a much bigger pay raise to leave their employer," Harter said. "People who are actively disengaged will leave for a smaller amount."

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HEADLINE	09/08 Clean energy jobs grow but wages lag
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/report-clean-energy-jobs-grow-wages-lag-fossil-89508698
GIST	<p>BERLIN -- Clean energy now provides more employment than the fossil fuel industry, reflecting the shift that efforts to tackle climate change are having on the global jobs market, according to a report Thursday.</p> <p>The International Energy Agency said a post-pandemic jobs rebound in the sector has been driven by emissions-cutting technologies such as electric vehicle production, building insulation, solar projects and wind farms.</p> <p>Clean energy, which under IEA's definition also includes nuclear power, is now estimated to account for more than half the 65 million energy sector jobs across all regions except Russia and the Middle East.</p> <p>However, the Paris-based agency said high energy prices including for fossil fuels have seen an upswing in employment, notably for liquefied natural gas infrastructure. Many countries in Europe are scrambling to find alternatives to Russian gas supplies due to the war in Ukraine.</p> <p>It also noted that wages in clean energy jobs lag behind those in the fossil fuel industry, where unionization rates are higher and risky work has been compensated with higher pay. The exception is nuclear, due to the highly skilled labor needed, the agency said.</p>

	<p>“Countries around the world are responding to the current crisis by seeking to accelerate the growth of homegrown clean energy industries,” said IEA's executive director, Fatih Birol. “The regions that make this move will see huge growth in jobs.”</p> <p>He urged companies, labor representatives and governments to ensure that clean energy projects provide high quality employment and attract a diverse workforce. Women are significantly underrepresented in the energy sector, which as a whole accounts for about 2% of the global workforce, IEA said.</p> <p>Where possible, fossil fuel workers should be given the option to retrain for clean energy jobs, the agency said. It predicted could up to 14 million new clean energy jobs could be created by 2030, with an additional 16 million workers switching to new roles related to clean energy.</p>
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Cyber, Tech Awareness

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HEADLINE	09/07 Insider threat task force: digital dangers
SOURCE	https://therecord.media/insider-threat-task-force-focuses-on-disinformation-remote-work/
GIST	<p>A U.S. intelligence community task force is highlighting the range of digital dangers that can expose federal agencies to insider threats due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and quickly multiplying online risks.</p> <p>Last week the National Insider Threat Task Force (NITTF) kicked off its latest annual, month-long program meant to emphasize, and hopefully negate, potential paths that could lead an employee to act against their organization, either through espionage and intellectual property theft or workplace violence and extremism.</p> <p>The government group was created by a 2011 executive order to sharpen the hunt for security risks among federal employees and contractors after Chelsea Manning's mass leaking of military and diplomatic secrets.</p> <p>Yet federal agencies still struggle with the issue, especially in the cybersecurity realm. Most famously, Edward Snowden released troves of the National Security Agency's most sensitive secrets. And just months ago, Joshua Schulte, a former Central Intelligence Agency software engineer, was convicted by a federal jury for causing the largest theft of classified information in the agency's history.</p> <p>Digital security was picked to be this year's focus thanks to a “confluence of a lot of things,” including the pandemic that drove much of the vast workforce online, according to Rebecca Morgan, deputy director of the NITTF, which is housed within the National Counterintelligence and Security Center.</p> <p>“There's always been remote work. But it wasn't on a scale that it was [before], and it was actually engaged in by more digital natives” that worked from home, she told The Record during a phone interview on Tuesday.</p> <p>Another trend that drove the team's decision was the rise in recent years of misinformation, disinformation and foreign malign influence campaigns, “which have come from a variety of adversaries and really increase the inherent vulnerability for insiders,” said Morgan.</p> <p>Employees “without realizing it, can make decisions based on faulty information... They can see their work environment becomes filled with distrust and divisiveness,” according to Morgan, noting Russia, China and North Korea are the top nation-state perpetrators of such falsehoods.</p> <p>For instance, task force officials witnessed an “increase” in phony social media profiles on social media created by Pyongyang's operatives to target research and academia to either undermine, or outright steal, emerging critical technologies, said Morgan.</p>

She added that domestic hackers, commercial competitors and other foreign powers also spread unfounded claims —that’s why a major thrust of the latest effort is to build media and digital literacy so that people understand the source of the information and can challenge their own biases.

On the positive side, she said, the government has undergone “a real improvement in our cyber defenses,” including movement [toward the implementation of zero-trust architecture](#) within entities.

Morgan conceded many of the online campaigns deployed to compromise individuals — such as phishing attacks and social engineering — are “not exactly new” but argued a spotlight should be put on them because “sometimes we pivot a little bit too frequently and we assume that other people are squared away on understanding the threat and what to do about it.”

She noted that at the federal level, all agencies required by the 2011 executive order to create an insider threat program have done so. Of those, 95 percent have achieved full operational capability and most have moved beyond minimum requirements and are now entering into maturity models.

“For me, successful programs are those that really take that proactive, preventative strategy and mitigate risk,” Morgan told **The Record**. “What do they say? An ounce of prevention is a pound of cure.”

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HEADLINE	09/08 Microsoft: DEV-0270 hackers ‘moonlighting’
SOURCE	https://thehackernews.com/2022/09/microsoft-warns-of-ransomware-attacks.html
GIST	<p>Microsoft's threat intelligence division on Wednesday assessed that a subgroup of the Iranian threat actor tracked as Phosphorus is conducting ransomware attacks as a "form of moonlighting" for personal gain.</p> <p>The tech giant, which is monitoring the activity cluster under the moniker DEV-0270 (aka Nemesis Kitten), said it's operated by a company that functions under the public aliases Secnerd and Lifeweb, citing infrastructure overlaps between the group and the two organizations.</p> <p>"DEV-0270 leverages exploits for high-severity vulnerabilities to gain access to devices and is known for the early adoption of newly disclosed vulnerabilities," Microsoft said.</p> <p>"DEV-0270 also extensively uses living-off-the-land binaries (LOLBINS) throughout the attack chain for discovery and credential access. This extends to its abuse of the built-in BitLocker tool to encrypt files on compromised devices."</p> <p>The use of BitLocker and DiskCryptor by Iranian actors for opportunistic ransomware attacks came to light earlier this May, when Secureworks disclosed a set of intrusions mounted by a threat group it tracks under the name Cobalt Mirage with ties to Phosphorus (aka Cobalt Illusion) and TunnelVision.</p> <p>DEV-0270 is known to scan the internet to find servers and devices susceptible to flaws in Microsoft Exchange Server, Fortinet FortiGate SSL-VPN, and Apache Log4j for obtaining initial access, followed by network reconnaissance and credential theft activities.</p> <p>Access to the compromised network is achieved by establishing persistence via a scheduled task. DEV-0270 then escalates privileges to the system level, allowing it to conduct post-exploitation actions such as disabling Microsoft Defender Antivirus to evade detection, lateral movement, and file encryption.</p> <p>"The threat group commonly uses native WMI, net, CMD, and PowerShell commands and registry configurations to maintain stealth and operational security," Microsoft said. "They also install and masquerade their custom binaries as legitimate processes to hide their presence."</p>

	Users are recommended to prioritize patching of internet-facing Exchange servers to mitigate risk, restrict network appliances like Fortinet SSL-VPN devices from making arbitrary connections to the internet, enforce strong passwords, and maintain regular data backups.
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HEADLINE	09/08 Hackers target financial services in Africa
SOURCE	https://thehackernews.com/2022/09/hackers-repeatedly-targeting-financial.html
GIST	<p>Major financial and insurance companies located in French-speaking nations in Africa have been targeted over the past two years as part of a persistent malicious campaign codenamed DangerousSavanna.</p> <p>Countries targeted include Ivory Coast, Morocco, Cameroon, Senegal, and Togo, with the spear-phishing attacks heavily focusing on Ivory Coast in recent months, Israeli cybersecurity firm Check Point said in a Tuesday report.</p> <p>Infection chains entail targeting employees of financial institutions with social engineering messages containing malicious attachments as a means of initial access, ultimately leading to the deployment of off-the-shelf malware such as Metasploit, PoshC2, DWservice, and AsyncRAT.</p> <p>"The threat actors' creativity is on display in the initial infection stage, as they persistently pursue the employees of the targeted companies, constantly changing infection chains that utilize a wide range of malicious file types, from self-written executable loaders and malicious documents, to ISO, LNK, JAR and VBE files in various combinations," the company said.</p> <p>The phishing emails are written in French and sent using Gmail and Hotmail services, with the messages also impersonating other financial institutions in Africa to boost their credibility.</p> <p>While attacks in 2021 leveraged macro-laced Microsoft Word documents as lures, the company's decision to block macros in files downloaded from the internet by default earlier this year has led the DangerousSavanna actors to pivot to PDF and ISO files.</p> <p>Furthermore, the first wave of attacks from the end of 2020 to the beginning of 2021 involved the use of bespoke .NET-based tools, which came disguised as PDF files attached to phishing emails, to retrieve next-stage droppers and loaders from remote servers.</p> <p>Regardless of the method used, post-exploitation activities carried out after obtaining an initial foothold include establishing persistence, performing reconnaissance, and delivering additional payloads to remotely control the host, kill anti-malware processes, and log keystrokes.</p> <p>The exact provenance of the threat actor remains unclear, but the frequent shift in its tools and methods demonstrates their knowledge of open-source software and their ability to fine-tune their tactics for maximizing financial gain.</p> <p>"If one infection chain didn't work out, they changed the attachment and the lure and tried targeting the same company again and again trying to find an entry point," Check Point said. "With social engineering via spear-phishing, all it takes is one incautious click by an unsuspecting user."</p>
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HEADLINE	09/08 Ukraine shuts more Russian bot farms
SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/ukraine-shutters-two-more-russian/
GIST	<p>The Ukrainian security service (SBU) has found and dismantled two more Russian bot farms it said were being used to spread disinformation in the war-torn country.</p> <p>Based in Kyiv and Odessa, the facilities comprised around 7000 fake accounts. They were being used to spread fake content designed to discredit Ukraine's army and leadership, justify Russian aggression and destabilize the social and political fabric of the country, the SBU claimed.</p>

The Kyiv bot farm was being run by a 24-year-old man from Zaporizhzhia, who registered fake accounts using Russian e-mail services and the virtual mobile numbers of Russian and Belarusian operators, sometimes using forged documents linked to Ukrainian citizens for verification.

He is said to have rented out these accounts to interested parties including the PR departments of political parties and Russian citizens, the SBU noted.

In Odessa, the bot farm dismantled by the authorities was run by four local men, the SBU said.

They focused on creating fake accounts on social networks and messaging apps, with the end goal of spreading panic in the region, which has long been a strategic target for the Russian invaders.

Once again, the group's clients were from Russia, [the SBU assessed](#).

Officers seized computer equipment, four servers, more than 250 USB modems, mobile phones, bank cards, and more than 400 SIM cards.

The raids were coordinated between the SBU and the Ukrainian National Police (NPU) under the supervision of the Odesa and Kyiv Prosecutor's Offices.

The Putin regime sees disinformation as a key strategic tool to help it win the war against its near neighbor. However, its efforts have been halted by strong Ukrainian resistance, timely sharing of US-led intelligence and local law enforcement efforts like this.

Last month, the [SBU dismantled infrastructure](#) based in Kyiv, Kharkiv and Vinnytsia used to beam destabilizing content to over 400,000 Ukrainians.

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HEADLINE	09/07 Mirai botnet resurfaces w/MooBot variant
SOURCE	https://www.hackread.com/mirai-botnet-moobot-variant-d-link-devices/
GIST	<p>Palo Alto Networks' Unit 42 researchers have reported the emergence of a new Mirai botnet variant dubbed MooBot. This variant is looking for unpatched D-Link devices to create its army of DDoS (distributed denial of service) bots. For compromising vulnerable D-Link routers, MooBot uses multiple exploits</p> <p>Re-Emergence of Notorious MooBot</p> <p>The MooBot botnet was first discovered by Qihoo 360's Netlab in Sep 2019, whereas the most recent wave of attacks involving MooBot, before the one detected by Palo Alto, was discovered by Fortinet analysts in Dec 2021. Researchers identified that MooBot targeted a flaw in Hikvision cameras and enlisted a large number of devices into its DDoS army.</p> <p>In early August, Unit 42 researchers discovered a new attack wave. This time, MooBot's targets were unpatched D-Link routers, which it compromised using old and new exploits.</p> <p>Exploited Vulnerabilities</p> <p>The botnet is exploiting four different vulnerabilities in D-Link devices, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CVE-2022-26258 (CVSS score: 9.8) – D-Link Remote Command Execution Vulnerability• CVE-2022-28958 (CVSS score: 9.8) – D-Link Remote Command Execution Vulnerability• CVE-2015-2051 (CVSS score: 10.0) – D-Link HNAP SOAPAction Header Command Execution Vulnerability• CVE-2018-6530 (CVSS score: 9.8) – D-Link SOAP Interface Remote Code Execution Vulnerability <p>Source: Palo Alto Networks</p>

Previously it targeted LILIN digital video recorders apart from [Hikvision video surveillance devices](#).

What Happens If Devices are Compromised?

According to Unit 42 researchers, an attacker can gain full control of the compromised devices. They can use them to perform various attacks, including remote code execution and retrieving MooBot payload from a remote host to parse instructions from a C2 server and [launch DDoS attacks](#). It can also target specific port numbers and IP addresses for DDoS.

D-Link has released security updates to address the flaws. However, there are still countless unpatched devices. Many are yet to be patched for the last two vulnerabilities ([CVE-2022-26258](#), [CVE-2022-28958](#)) discovered in March and May 2022.

The low-attack complexity of the vulnerabilities lets the attacker gain remote code execution, and using arbitrary commands they can easily get malware binary. It is worth noting that the C2 address used in the current attack wave is different from the wave identified by Fortinet.

It is necessary to [apply patches](#) as soon as possible and keep your device updated to prevent the MooBot threat.

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HEADLINE	09/07 'The North Face' credential-stuffing attack
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/200-000-north-face-accounts-hacked-in-credential-stuffing-attack/
GIST	<p>Outdoor apparel brand 'The North Face' was targeted in a large-scale credential stuffing attack that has resulted in the hacking of 194,905 accounts on the thenorthface.com website.</p> <p>A credential stuffing attack is when threat actors use email addresses/usernames and password combinations obtained from data breaches to attempt to hack into user accounts on other websites.</p> <p>The success of these attacks relies on the practice of password recycling, where a person uses the same credentials across multiple online platforms.</p> <p>The credential stuffing attack on The North Face website began on July 26, 2022, but the website's administrators detected the unusual activity on August 11, 2022, and were able to stop it on August 19, 2022.</p> <p>After investigating the attack, North Face determined that the attackers managed to breach close to 200,000 accounts using valid credentials, potentially accessing the following customer information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full name• Purchase history• Billing address• Shipping address• Telephone number• Account creation date• Gender• XPLR Pass reward records <p>Payment details like credit card data are not stored on the website, so the attackers could not access sensitive financial information.</p> <p>"We do not keep a copy of payment card details on thenorthface.com. We only retain a "token" linked to your payment card, and only our third-party payment card processor keeps payment card details," explains the firm in the breach notification.</p> <p>"The token cannot be used to initiate a purchase anywhere other than on thenorthface.com."</p>

In response to the security incident, the brand's parent firm, VF Corporation (formerly Vanity Fair Mills), is sending [notices of data breach](#) to impacted customers.

Additionally, all user passwords have been reset, and all payment card tokens on accounts accessed by unauthorized intruders were wiped.

Hence, impacted customers with an account on the website will have to enter a new password and re-enter their payment card details to make a purchase.

Of course, affected users are expected to pick a unique, strong (long) password and avoid the comfort of recycling credentials.

Also, if the customers use the same passwords on other online platforms, those should be changed immediately to avoid additional compromises.

Notably, this is the second time The North Face reset passwords following a successful credential stuffing attack, with the previous one dating back to [November 2020](#).

VF Corporation owns several successful brands besides The North Face, like Vans, Timberland, Eastpak, Kipling, Dickies, and Napapijri. However, those don't appear to have been impacted by this or similar attacks.

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HEADLINE	09/07 NKorea hackers new MagicRAT malware
SOURCE	https://thehackernews.com/2022/09/north-korean-hackers-spotted-using-new.html?&web_view=true
GIST	<p>The prolific North Korean nation-state actor known as the Lazarus Group has been linked to a new remote access trojan called MagicRAT.</p> <p>The previously unknown piece of malware is said to have been deployed in victim networks that had been initially breached via successful exploitation of internet-facing VMware Horizon servers, Cisco Talos said in a report shared with The Hacker News.</p> <p>"While being a relatively simple RAT capability-wise, it was built with recourse to the Qt Framework, with the sole intent of making human analysis harder, and automated detection through machine learning and heuristics less likely," Talos researchers Jung soo An, Asheer Malhotra, and Vitor Ventura said.</p> <p>Lazarus Group, also known as APT38, Dark Seoul, Hidden Cobra, and Zinc, refers to a cluster of financial motivated and espionage-driven cyber activities undertaken by the North Korean government as a means to sidestep sanctions imposed on the country and meet its strategic objectives.</p> <p>Like other umbrella collectives Winnti and MuddyWater, the state-sponsored hacking collective also has "spin-off" groups such as Bluenoroff and Andariel, which focus on specific kinds of attacks and targets.</p> <p>While the Bluenoroff subgroup is focused on attacking foreign financial institutions and perpetrating monetary theft, Andariel is devoted in its pursuit of South Korean organizations and businesses.</p> <p>"Lazarus develops their own attack tools and malware, can use innovative attack techniques, works very methodically, and takes their time," cybersecurity firm NCC Group said in a report detailing the threat actor.</p> <p>"In particular, the North Korean methods aim to avoid detection by security products and to remain undetected within the hacked systems for as long as possible."</p>

Return to Top	<p>The latest addition to its wide-ranging malware toolset shows the group's ability to employ a multitude of tactics and techniques depending on their targets and their operational goals.</p> <p>A C++-based implant, MagicRAT is designed to achieve persistence by creating scheduled tasks on the compromised system. It's also "rather simple" in that it provides the attacker with a remote shell to execute arbitrary commands and carry out file operations.</p> <p>MagicRAT is also capable of launching additional payloads retrieved from a remote server on infected hosts. One of the executables retrieved from the command-and-control (C2) server takes the form of a GIF image file, but in reality is a lightweight port scanner.</p> <p>Furthermore, the C2 infrastructure associated with MagicRAT has been found harboring and serving newer versions of TigerRAT, a backdoor formerly attributed to Andariel and is engineered to execute commands, take screenshots, log keystrokes, and harvest system information.</p> <p>Also incorporated in the latest variant is a USB Dump feature that allows the adversary to hunt for files with specific extensions, alongside laying the groundwork for implementing video capture from webcams.</p> <p>"The discovery of MagicRAT in the wild is an indication of Lazarus' motivations to rapidly build new, bespoke malware to use along with their previously known malware such as TigerRAT to target organizations worldwide," the researchers said.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 APT42: Iranian-linked espionage group
SOURCE	https://www.mandiant.com/resources/blog/apt42-CHARMS-cons-compromises?&web_view=true
GIST	<p>Today, Mandiant is releasing a comprehensive report detailing APT42, an Iranian state-sponsored cyber espionage group tasked with conducting information collection and surveillance operations against individuals and organizations of strategic interest to the Iranian government. We estimate with moderate confidence that APT42 operates on behalf of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)'s Intelligence Organization (IRGC-IO) based on targeting patterns that align with the organization's operational mandates and priorities.</p> <p>The full published report covers APT42's recent and historical activity dating back to at least 2015, the group's tactics, techniques, and procedures, targeting patterns, and elucidates historical connections to APT35. APT42 partially coincides with public reporting on TA453 (Proofpoint), Yellow Garuda (PwC), ITG18 (IBM X-Force), Phosphorus (Microsoft), and Charming Kitten (ClearSky and CERTFA).</p> <p>APT42 Operations</p> <p>APT42 uses highly targeted spear-phishing and social engineering techniques designed to build trust and rapport with their victims in order to access their personal or corporate email accounts or to install Android malware on their mobile devices. In addition, APT42 infrequently uses Windows malware to complement their credential harvesting and surveillance efforts.</p> <p>APT42 operations broadly fall into three categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credential harvesting: APT42 frequently targets corporate and personal email accounts through highly targeted spear-phishing campaigns with enhanced emphasis on building trust and rapport with the target before attempting to steal their credentials. Mandiant also has indications that the group leverages credential harvesting to collect Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) codes to bypass authentication methods and has used compromised credentials to pursue access to the networks, devices, and accounts of employers, colleagues, and relatives of the initial victim. • Surveillance operations: As of at least late 2015, a subset of APT42's infrastructure served as command-and-control (C2) servers for Android mobile malware designed to track locations, monitor communications, and generally surveil the activities of individuals of interest to the Iranian government, including activists and dissidents inside Iran. • Malware deployment: While APT42 primarily prefers credential harvesting over activity on disk, several custom backdoors and lightweight tools complement its arsenal. The group likely

incorporates these tools into their operations when the objectives extend beyond credential harvesting.

Mandiant has observed over 30 confirmed targeted APT42 operations spanning these categories since early 2015. The total number of APT42 intrusion operations is almost certainly much higher based on the group's high operational tempo, visibility gaps caused in part by the group's targeting of personal email accounts and domestically focused efforts, and extensive open-source industry reporting on threat clusters likely associated with APT42.

APT42 Targeting Patterns

The targeting patterns for APT42 operations are similar to other Iranian cyber espionage actors, with a large segment of its activity focused on the Middle East region. However, unlike other suspected IRGC-affiliated cyber espionage groups that have focused on targeting the defense industrial base or conducting large-scale collection of personally identifiable information (PII), APT42 primarily targets organizations and individuals deemed opponents or enemies of the regime, specifically gaining access to their personal accounts and mobile devices. The group has consistently targeted Western think tanks, researchers, journalists, current Western government officials, former Iranian government officials, and the Iranian diaspora abroad.

Some APT42 activity indicates the group alters its operational focus as Iran's priorities evolve, to include targeted operations against the pharmaceutical sector at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 and pursuing domestic and foreign-based opposition groups prior to an Iranian presidential election. This indicates that APT42 is trusted by the Iranian government to quickly react to geopolitical changes by adjusting their flexible operations to targets of operational interest to Tehran.

Potential Ties Between APT42 and Ransomware Activity

Mandiant further highlights open-source reporting from Microsoft claiming a connection between intrusion activity clusters that generally align with APT42 and UNC2448, an Iran-nexus threat actor known for widespread scanning for various vulnerabilities, the use of the Fast Reverse Proxy tool, and reported ransomware activity using BitLocker. Notably, Mandiant has not observed technical overlaps between APT42 and UNC2448.

- In November 2021, Microsoft [reported](#) that "Phosphorus" had targeted Fortinet FortiOS SSL VPN and unpatched on-premises Exchange servers globally with the intent of deploying ransomware such as BitLocker on vulnerable networks, aligning with activity we track as UNC2448. [Previous reporting](#) on Phosphorus generally aligned with APT42's credential harvesting and spear-phishing operations.

While Mandiant has not observed technical overlaps between APT42 and UNC2448, the latter may also have ties to the IRGC-IO. We assess with moderate confidence that UNC2448 and the Revengers Telegram persona are operated by at least two Iranian front companies, Najee Technology and Afkar System, based on open-source information and operational security lapses by the threat actors. Public leaking campaigns from the Lab Dookhtegan Telegram account further allege these companies are responsible for threat activity aligned with UNC2448 and operate on behalf of the IRGC-IO.

- Mandiant identified links between UNC2448, the Revengers persona, an individual named Ahmad Khatibi, and a likely Iranian front company named Afkar System.
- The Revengers persona had offered data and access to primarily Israeli companies for sale on its Telegram channel between February and September 2021.
- Additionally, infrastructure overlaps likely caused by human error indicate that UNC2448 has connections to a second front company, Najee Technology.
- Public posts by the Lab Dookhtegan Telegram channel in July 2022 claim Afkar System and Najee Technology are front companies conducting cyber operations on behalf of the IRGC's Intelligence Organization.

Looking Ahead

APT42 activity poses a threat to foreign policy officials, commentators, and journalists, particularly those in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Israel, working on Iran-related projects. Additionally, the

	<p>group's surveillance activity highlights the real-world risk to individual targets of APT42 operations, which include Iranian dual-nationals, former government officials, and dissidents both inside Iran and those who previously left the country, often out of fear for their personal safety.</p> <p>We do not anticipate significant changes to APT42's operational tactics and mandate given the long history of activity and imperviousness to infrastructure take downs and a media spotlight on operational security failures. Nevertheless, the group has displayed its ability to rapidly alter its operational focus as Iran's priorities change over time with evolving domestic and geopolitical conditions. We assess with high confidence that APT42 will continue to perform cyber espionage and surveillance operations aligned with evolving Iranian operational intelligence collection requirements.</p>
Return to Top	Read the APT42 report

HEADLINE	09/07 DDoS attacks on Cobalt Strike servers
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/ransomware-gangs-cobalt-strike-servers-ddosed-with-anti-russia-messages/?&web_view=true
GIST	<p>Someone is flooding Cobalt Strike servers operated by former members of the Conti ransomware gang with anti-Russian messages to disrupt their activity.</p> <p>The operators of Conti ransomware completed turning off their internal infrastructure in May this year but its members have dispersed to other ransomware gangs, such as Quantum, Hive, and BlackCat.</p> <p>However, former Conti members continue to use the same Cobalt Strike infrastructure to conduct new attacks under other ransomware operations.</p> <p>Server flood</p> <p>Someone is now tracking the TeamServers (C2) used by ransomware actors to control the Cobalt Strike (CS) Beacon payloads on compromised hosts (clients), which allow lateral movement on the network.</p> <p>When flooding the CS servers, these people are using the username “<i>Stop Putin!</i>” on multiple computers and changing their computer name to various messages, such as “<i>Stop the war!</i>,” “<i>15000+ dead Russian soldiers!</i>,” and “<i>Be a Russian patriot!</i>”</p> <p>Vitali Kremez, the CEO of cyber intelligence company Advanced Intelligence (AdvIntel), told BleepingComputer that whoever is running these attacks initially targeted at least four Cobalt Strike servers allegedly controlled by ex-Conti members.</p> <p>The researcher says that the messages are flooding the servers at a high rate of about two every second. As an effect of this large number of pings, TeamServer's Java application is overloaded and activity is disrupted in a similar way a denial-of-service (DoS) condition would.</p> <p>Running Cobalt Strike TeamServer from a Java application was possible in versions of the toolkit up to 4.6, released this year in April. In more recent releases, the component runs from an executable image (TeamServerImage).</p> <p>Kremez says whoever is behind this activity is constantly targeting Cobalt Strike servers believed to be operated by previous Conti ransomware members, resuming the flood whenever a new server is discovered.</p> <p>Turning the tables on cybercriminals</p> <p>It is unclear who is behind these messages (it could be anyone from a security researcher, to law enforcement agencies, to a cybercriminal with a grudge for siding with Russia) but it looks like they're keeping the threat actor busy.</p>

	<p>Disrupting ransomware gangs' activity with denial-of-service has happened before, the LockBit operation being a recent target, allegedly for encrypting systems belonging to digital security company Entrust.</p> <p>The attack was serious enough for LockBit to shut down its leak sites and start reorganizing its infrastructure. In the meantime, none of the data the gang published was available.</p> <p>The hackers blamed the DDoS on Entrust since the HTTPS requests came with the message to delete the company's data.</p> <p>However, the disruption was temporary and the ransomware actor came online with stronger infrastructure allowing them to keep the stolen data available even when facing distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/08 Hospital attacks, higher mortality rates
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/security/cyberattacks-us-hospitals-mean-higher-mortality-rates-study-finds-rcna46697
GIST	<p>Cyberattacks against health care facilities, a near-constant occurrence in the U.S., often lead to increased patient mortality rates, a new study has found.</p> <p>The study, conducted by the Ponemon Institute, a Washington, D.C., think tank, interviewed more than 600 information technology professionals across more than 100 health care facilities. Its findings are some of the most concrete evidence to date that the steady drumbeat of hackers attacking American medical centers leads to patients' receiving worse care and being more likely to die.</p> <p>Two-thirds of respondents in the Ponemon study who had experienced ransomware attacks said they disrupted patient care, and 59% of them found they increased the length of patients' stays, straining resources. Almost one-quarter said they led to increased mortality rates at their facilities.</p> <p>In a ransomware attack, hackers gain access to an organization's computer networks, lock up its and often its data and demand payment. They have become a scourge for the health care industry in recent years. Hospitals don't always publicize when they've been victims; documented attacks, however, have increased every year since 2018, culminating in 297 known attacks last year, according to a survey the cybersecurity company Recorded Future provided to NBC News.</p> <p>There have been at least 12 ransomware attacks on health care facilities in the U.S. this year, said Brett Callow, an analyst at the ransomware company Emsisoft. But because some health care companies represent multiple locations, those attacks accounted for 56 different facilities, he said.</p> <p>More than half of health care facilities represented in the survey had been infected with ransomware in the past three years, the Ponemon study found.</p> <p>Health care facilities run the gamut from giant hospital chains to small individual shops with only a handful of employees and few or no dedicated IT and cybersecurity staffers. Larger hospital networks may have more centralized experts, but they are also larger targets, and a single attack can slow patient care at hundreds of hospitals across the country, as happened in the attack on Universal Health Services in 2020.</p> <p>There has been only a single public claim that named a specific person said to have died because of a ransomware attack in the U.S. In 2020, an Alabama woman sued her hospital, which had been the victim of a ransomware attack, after her newborn baby died. The case is ongoing.</p> <p>But there's long been little doubt that persistent cyberattacks against hospitals have caused serious harm to patients, said Josh Corman, a vice president at the cybersecurity company Claroty and the author of a landmark report on ransomware's effects on health care for the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, the U.S. government's main cyber watchdog.</p>

“We know that delays in care affect mortality rates, and we know that cyberattacks introduce delays,” Corman said.

While ransomware attacks are generally regarded as private criminal enterprises, some of the most prolific hackers behind them have ties to governments. Conti, a Russian-speaking gang [behind an attack](#) on Ireland’s national health care service that led to months of disruptions, expressed some ties to Russian intelligence in [leaked chats](#), and the State Department [has claimed](#) it has links to the Russian government.

The U.S. has [also accused](#) North Korea of being responsible for a different strain of ransomware that targets American hospitals, called Maui.

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HEADLINE	09/07 Report: ransomware in retail 2022
SOURCE	https://news.sophos.com/en-us/2022/09/07/the-state-of-ransomware-in-retail-2022/
GIST	<p>We’ve just released the State of Ransomware in Retail 2022 report, which offers fresh insights into ransomware attack rates, costs and recovery, and ransom payouts by retail organizations over the last year.</p> <p>The report is based on our annual study of the real-world ransomware experiences of IT professionals, of which 422 respondents belonged to the retail sector, working in mid-sized companies (100-5,000 employees) across 31 countries.</p> <p>The study reveals an increasingly challenging attack environment, with retail reporting an above-average financial and operational impact of ransomware attacks. It also sheds light onto the relationship between ransomware and cyber insurance, including the role cyber insurance is playing in driving changes to cyber defenses.</p> <p>Here are the key findings from the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retail reported a 75% increase in the rate of ransomware attacks over the last year: 77% of organizations were hit in 2021, up from 44% in 2020• The increased attack rate is part of a cross-sector, global trend. The retail sector reported the second-highest rate of ransomware attacks across all sectors• Retail experienced an above-average rate of data encryption at 68%; for comparison, the global average was 65%• Only 28% of retail respondents said they were able to stop an attack before data could be encrypted – below the global average of 31%• 49% of retail organizations paid the ransom to restore data – higher than the global average of 46%• The amount of data restored by retail after paying the ransom dropped from 67% in 2020 to 62% in 2021. Following the same trend, the percentage of retail organizations that got ALL their encrypted data back went down from 9% in 2020 to 5% in 2021. For comparison, the global average in 2021 was 4%.• The average ransom payment by retail was less than one-third of the cross-sector average: \$226,044 in retail vs \$812,360 across sectors• The overall cost to remediate a ransomware attack for retail organizations dropped over the last year, down from US\$1.97M in 2020 to US\$1.27 in 2021. The cross-sector average was US\$1.4M, for comparison.• 88% of retail organizations reported having cyber insurance coverage against ransomware – the second highest rate across all sectors, compared with the cross-sector average of 83%• Cyber insurance is driving retail organizations to improve cyber defenses – 97% in retail have upgraded their cyber defenses to secure coverage• Retail reported a below-average rate of ransom payout by insurance providers at 35% compared to the cross-sector average of 40%

	<p>The increasing rate of ransomware attacks in retail demonstrates that adversaries have become considerably more capable of executing attacks at scale by successfully deploying the ransomware-as-a-service model.</p> <p>Most retail organizations are choosing to reduce the financial risks associated with such attacks by taking cyber insurance. For them, it is reassuring to know that insurers pay some costs in almost all claims. However, the sector has one of the lowest ransom payout rates by cyber insurers.</p> <p>It is getting harder for organizations, especially in the retail sector, to secure coverage. This has driven almost all retail organizations to make changes to their cyber defenses to improve their cyber insurance positions.</p>
Return to Top	Read the full report: The State of Ransomware in Retail 2022

HEADLINE	09/07 Killnet claims DDoS attack Japan govt. sites
SOURCE	https://techmonitor.ai/technology/cybersecurity/japan-cyberattack-killnet
GIST	<p>Japan's government says it is investigating whether Russian hackers Killnet are behind a distributed denial of service (DDoS) cyberattack which crippled 20 government websites. Killnet has form for launching such attacks against countries which have supported Ukraine in its war with Russia, having targeted governments around the world in recent months.</p> <p>Killnet has claimed responsibility for the attack, which impacted sites spread across four government departments on Tuesday. The government says most services are now restored, though a tweet from Japan's digital agency this morning said problems remain in accessing e-Gov, an administrative portal used by citizens.</p> <p>The portal was reportedly one of the websites hit in the attack.</p> <p>Is Killnet behind the Japan cyberattack?</p> <p>The attack began at 4.30pm Japanese time, and at around the same time, the hacking group Killnet posted a message on its Telegram channel claiming it was behind the assault.</p> <p>Killnet said it was revolting against Tokyo's "militarism," and that it was "kicking the samurai".</p> <p>Japan's chief cabinet secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said that the Japanese National Center of Incident Readiness and Strategy for Cybersecurity was launching a full investigation into the incident.</p> <p>"We are aware that the (Killnet) hacker group suggested it was behind the attacks, but at the moment we are still investigating the cause of the failures, including the group's involvement," he told <i>Reuters</i>.</p> <p>Who is Killnet?</p> <p>Killnet is a cybercrime group known to be sympathetic to Russia. It emerged earlier in the year as a DDoS-as-a-service tool, allowing customers to rent botnet access for \$1,350 a month, according to researchers at cybersecurity vendor Recorded Future.</p> <p>Since the start of the war in Ukraine, the group has thrown its weight behind hacktivist activities in support of Vladimir Putin's government, launching DDoS attacks on countries supporting Ukraine, going as far as to "declare war" on ten countries, including the UK, which were sanctioning Russia.</p> <p>In June it claimed a DDoS attack on government infrastructure in Lithuania, and the following month it struck again, this time targeting Lithuanian energy company Ignitis. Earlier in the year, it had conducted a similar offensive against Romanian government websites.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Former Conti members now target Ukraine
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SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/google-former-conti-cybercrime-gang-members-now-targeting-ukraine/
GIST	<p>Google says some former Conti cybercrime gang members, now part of a threat group tracked as UAC-0098, are targeting Ukrainian organizations and European non-governmental organizations (NGOs).</p> <p>UAC-0098 is an initial access broker known for using the IcedID banking trojan to provide ransomware groups with access to compromised systems within enterprise networks.</p> <p>The company's Threat Analysis Group (TAG), a dedicated team of security experts acting as a defense force for Google users from state-sponsored attacks, started tracking this threat group in April after detecting a phishing campaign that pushed the Conti-linked AnchorMail backdoor.</p> <p>"In the initial encounter with UAC-0098, 'lackeyBuilder' was observed for the first time. This is a previously undisclosed builder for AnchorMail, one of the private backdoors used by the Conti groups," Google TAG said.</p> <p>"Since then, the actor consistently used tools and services traditionally employed by cybercrime actors for the purpose of acquiring initial access: IcedID trojan, EtterSilent malicious document builder, and the 'Stolen Image Evidence' social engineering malware distribution service."</p> <p>This group's attacks were observed between mid-April to mid-June, with frequent changes in its tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs), tooling, and lures, while targeting Ukrainian orgs (such as hotel chains) and impersonating the National Cyber Police of Ukraine or representatives of Elon Musk and StarLink.</p> <p>In subsequent campaigns, UAC-0098 was seen delivering IcedID and Cobalt Strike malicious payloads in phishing attacks targeting Ukrainian organizations and European NGOs.</p> <p>Links to the Conti cybercrime group</p> <p>Google TAG says its attribution is based on multiple overlaps between UAC-0098, Trickbot, and the Conti cybercrime group.</p> <p>"Based on multiple indicators, TAG assesses some members of UAC-0098 are former members of the Conti cybercrime group repurposing their techniques to target Ukraine," Google TAG added.</p> <p>"TAG assesses UAC-0098 acted as an initial access broker for various ransomware groups including Quantum and Conti, a Russian cybercrime gang known as FIN12 / WIZARD SPIDER.</p> <p>"UAC-0098 activities are representative examples of blurring lines between financially motivated and government backed groups in Eastern Europe, illustrating a trend of threat actors changing their targeting to align with regional geopolitical interests."</p> <p>The threat group's activities detected and revealed today by Google also align with previous reports from IBM Security X-Force and CERT-UA, who also linked attacks on Ukrainian organizations and government entities to the TrickBot and Conti cybercrime gangs.</p> <p>Conti is still around</p> <p>The Russian-based Conti gang launched a ransomware operation in 2020, taking the place of the Ryuk ransomware group.</p> <p>Over time, the gang grew into a cybercrime syndicate, taking over the development of multiple malware operations, including TrickBot and BazarBackdoor.</p> <p>A Ukrainian security researcher leaked over 170,000 internal chat conversations belonging to the gang, together with the source code for the Conti ransomware encryptor, after Conti sided with Russia following its invasion of Ukraine.</p>

While the group has since shut down the 'Conti' brand, the cybercrime syndicate continues to operate after splitting into smaller cells and infiltrating or taking over other ransomware or cybercrime operations.

Some ransomware gangs infiltrated by Conti members include [BlackCat](#), Hive, AvosLocker, Hello Kitty, and the recently revived [Quantum](#) operation.

Other Conti members are now running their own data extortion operations that do not encrypt data, such as [BlackByte](#), [Karakurt](#), and the [Bazarcall collective](#).

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HEADLINE	09/07 Conti v. Monti: reinvention or rebranding?
SOURCE	https://intel471.com/blog/conti-vs-monti-a-reinvention-or-just-a-simple-rebranding
GIST	<p>It's a familiar sounding story. A young organization with a hot software product and skyrocketing revenues, employee hiring fairs, lucrative salaries, bonuses and team recognition programs. But this story is not about a vibrant tech company in Silicon Valley or Austin; rather it is a real story of a criminal organization that manages and supports the insidious Conti ransomware.</p> <p>Conti is advanced ransomware that first emerged in early 2020. It uses a bespoke encryption routine to identify and encrypt files quickly and efficiently, making it especially dangerous. The Conti gang uses a "double-extortion" technique, which encrypts victims' data and demands payment. They also take copies of the victims' data, permitting them to expose or sell the data if the victim refuses to pay.</p> <p>The operators behind the malware are a high-profile ransomware group responsible for multiple high-impact attacks. They are otherwise known as Wizard Spider and may be part of the wider Trickbot cybercrime syndicate. Reportedly, they are based in Russia and support the Russian government's agenda, including the war in Ukraine. The malware is distributed under a Ransomware as a Service (RaaS) model. The Conti gang distributes access to its malware to "affiliates" in exchange for a share of collected ransom payments. This aspect allows them to scale operations. Some reports cite the Conti gang operates as a modern start-up with salaries, bonuses and employee recognition awards.</p> <p>In just a few years, the Conti ransomware has caused damage and disruption globally. Conti has targeted hospitals, governments, financial institutions and enterprises including Snapon, Shutterfly, the Irish healthcare system and several agencies of the Costa Rican government. The FBI describes the Conti ransomware as "the costliest strain of ransomware ever documented." It estimates more than 1,000 victims have suffered Conti-associated attacks and total victim payouts exceed USD \$150 million as of early 2022.</p> <p>The end of Conti</p> <p>As with any organization, disgruntled employees sometimes turn against their employers. In March 2022, a Ukrainian researcher working for the Conti gang went rogue. Thought to be unhappy with the Conti gang's Russian government affiliation and its support for the war in Ukraine, the researcher leaked 393 files containing over 60,000 internal messages from the Conti gang's private chat server. The leaked information has been dubbed the Conti Leaks and includes other sensitive data about the gang's operations, tools, and costs.</p> <p>Since then, infosec researchers everywhere have been sifting through this massive data treasure trove. The internal breach has proved tremendously costly for the Conti gang, leaving them terribly exposed. To add to their pain, in May 2022 the Rewards for Justice group within the US State Department announced new bounties of up to USD \$10 million for anyone who provides useful information about individual members of Conti. Specifically, the agency wants to know about five specific gang members: actors using the handles Professor, Reshaev, Tramp, Dandis, and Target.</p> <p>On May 19, 2022, the admin panel of the Conti ransomware gang's official website shut down. Shortly thereafter, in the wake of the Conti Leaks and (perhaps) the Rewards for Justice announcement, the gang shut down its attack infrastructure.</p>

Out with the old...the emergence of Monti

In recent months, Conti's activities have quieted. Some researchers have suggested that Conti's diminished actions result from a rebranding exercise like many ransomware strains have done before, with a number of Conti gang members likely involved. Other reports indicate that other RaaS operations have employed ex-Conti operators including Karakurt and BlackByte.

Though there is no iron-clad evidence of Conti rebranding as Monti, Conti source was leaked publicly in [March 2022](#). Consequently, it is possible that anybody could use the publicly available source code to create their own ransomware based on Conti. This could be the case with Monti from our analysis of the disassembled code. Monti's entry point is very similar to Conti's, as seen below. As such, Monti could be a rebrand of Conti or simply a new ransomware variant that has been developed using the leaked source code mentioned above.

Whether this is Conti being rebranded as Monti, in a bid to mock the former strain, or it is just another new ransomware variant on the block, it is likely we will continue to see this new variant impact businesses globally. Nevertheless, using publicly available binaries to create a new ransomware or relaunch an old one will hopefully give defenders an edge when dealing with Monti as it evolves.

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HEADLINE	09/07 US bans tech facilities in China for decade
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/sep/07/us-bans-advanced-tech-firms-from-building-facilities-in-china-for-a-decade
GIST	<p>US technology firms that receive government funding will be banned from building “advanced technology facilities” in China for a decade, the Biden administration has announced, as it outlined plans to increase domestic production of semiconductors.</p> <p>The requirements come under the US government's near-\$53bn (£46bn) plan to scale up manufacturing of semiconductor chips – the “brain” in every electronic device from cars to household appliances – which are predominantly produced in Asia.</p> <p>The US Chips and Science Act (Chips), approved by Congress in August, is part of the American response to a long-running technological dispute between Washington and Beijing, as US firms demand more government support to reduce reliance on components produced in Chinese factories.</p> <p>The US Department of Commerce said it hoped to begin seeking applications by next February for \$39bn in government semiconductor subsidies to build new production facilities in the US. The plan will also give a 25% investment tax credit for chip plants, where construction begins from 2023.</p> <p>“We’re also going to be implementing the guardrails to ensure those who receive Chips funds cannot compromise national security,” the US commerce secretary, Gina Raimondo, said. “They’re not allowed to use this money to invest in China; they can’t develop leading-edge technologies in China; they can’t send latest technology overseas.”</p> <p>The US currently only produces about 10% of the world’s supply of semiconductors; most chips are manufactured in factories in Taiwan and South Korea.</p> <p>Global shortages of computer chips, prompted by the coronavirus pandemic, have caused large production delays for carmakers in the UK and beyond, as well as for technology companies and other manufacturers. In addition, the industry has gained increased geopolitical prominence as China has begun asserting itself on the world stage under its president, Xi Jinping, including threatening Taiwan.</p> <p>This has led to investment in and expansion of semiconductor production in the US, as well as in Japan and the EU.</p>

	<p>“These funds are intended to help companies maximise the scale of their projects. We’re going to be pushing companies to go bigger and be bolder,” Raimondo said. “We’re going to negotiate these deals one at a time,” she added, saying the companies receiving government funds would need to “prove to us the money is absolutely necessary to make these investments”.</p> <p>The Chips Act commits a total of \$280bn to hi-tech manufacturing and research, and is designed to increase the US’s competitiveness with China.</p> <p>China’s embassy in Washington previously opposed the bill, saying it was reminiscent of a “cold war mentality”.</p> <p>The US crackdown on the sale of technology to China has already begun to have an impact, with the US chip designer Nvidia disclosing last week that it had been told by US officials to stop exporting two top computing chips for artificial intelligence work to China.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Albania cuts Iran ties over cyberattack
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/world/albania-cuts-iran-ties-orders-diplomats-go-after-cyber-attack-pm-says-2022-09-07/
GIST	<p>TIRANA, Sept 7 (Reuters) - Albania severed diplomatic relations with Iran on Wednesday and kicked out its diplomats after a cyberattack in July it blamed on the Islamic Republic, a move Washington supported as it vowed to take action in response to the attack on its NATO ally.</p> <p>Albania ordered Iranian diplomats and embassy staff to leave within 24 hours.</p> <p>"The government has decided with immediate effect to end diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran," Prime Minister Edi Rama said in a video statement.</p> <p>"This extreme response ... is fully proportionate to the gravity and risk of the cyberattack that threatened to paralyse public services, erase digital systems and hack into state records, steal government intranet electronic communication and stir chaos and insecurity in the country," Rama said.</p> <p>There was no immediate comment from the Iranian Embassy in Tirana. There were no police units around the Iranian embassy premises in Tirana.</p> <p>The United States said it concluded after weeks of investigation that Iran was behind the "reckless and irresponsible" July 15 cyberattack.</p> <p>"The United States will take further action to hold Iran accountable for actions that threaten the security of a U.S. ally and set a troubling precedent for cyberspace," the White House National Security Council said in a statement.</p> <p>TENSE RELATIONS SINCE 2014</p> <p>Albania and Iran have had tense relations since 2014, when Albania accepted some 3,000 members of the exiled opposition group People's Mujahideen Organization of Iran, also known by its Farsi name Mujahideen-e-Khalq, who have settled in a camp near Durres, the country's main port.</p> <p>U.S. Cybersecurity firm Mandiant, which noted the hacking activity in a blog post earlier this month, said the group - which had ties to Iran - deployed a complex attack which used malicious data-wiping software against Iranian dissidents.</p> <p>"This is possibly the strongest public response to a cyberattack we have ever seen," John Hultquist, Vice President of Intelligence at Mandiant, said in an emailed statement. "While we have seen a host of other diplomatic consequences in the past, they have not been as severe or broad as this action".</p>

	<p>The move comes days after NATO member state Montenegro blamed a criminal group called Cuba Ransomware for a digital attack on its government infrastructure which officials there described as unprecedented.</p> <p>"Even though the incidents are probably unrelated, regular disruptions to government infrastructure are an alarming trend," Hultquist said.</p> <p>Albania has previously said it had foiled several planned attacks by Iranian agents against the Iranian opposition group.</p> <p>"The in-depth investigation provided us with indisputable evidence that the cyberattack against our country was orchestrated and sponsored by the Islamic Republic of Iran through the engagement of four groups that enacted the aggression," Rama said.</p> <p>The U.S. government has been on the ground for weeks with private sector partners to investigate and help Albania recover from the attack that destroyed government data and disrupted public services, the White House said.</p> <p>"We have concluded that the Government of Iran conducted this reckless and irresponsible cyberattack and that it is responsible for subsequent hack and leak operations," it said.</p> <p>The United States called the attack unprecedented because it said it violated the peacetime norm of not damaging critical infrastructure that the public relied on.</p>
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Terrorism, Extremism

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HEADLINE	09/07 Mozambique struggles: extremist violence
SOURCE	https://allafrica.com/stories/202209080045.html
GIST	<p>Maputo, Mozambique — Mozambique's president said Islamist militants in the country's northern Nampula province have killed six people, all by beheading, and abducted three others. The Islamist militant movement in northern Mozambique is spreading to new territory despite efforts by government and regional forces to contain it.</p> <p>Speaking live on national radio Wednesday from the southern Gaza province, President Filipe Jacinto Nyusi confirmed the beheadings and abductions and said dozens of houses were set on fire on Tuesday.</p> <p>This was the third terrorist attack within five days in Nampula province, where the incidents are creating a new wave of displaced people, though authorities do not have exact numbers.</p> <p>The president said the militants were attempting to bolster their numbers. He said the militants tried to recruit new members in Nampula province but were unsuccessful.</p> <p>"Hence, their nervousness," the president said in Portuguese. "They are very nervous."</p> <p>On Friday night, militants attacked the village of Kutua, in the district of Eráti. On Sunday, they attacked the village of Naminhanha, also in the Memba district.</p> <p>In his speech, Nyusi said Mozambique's defense and security forces, with the support of troops from Rwanda and the regional bloc SADC, are fighting the militants.</p> <p>The president said Mozambican forces recently recaptured a terrorist base.</p>

	<p>He said defense and security forces took over Katupha base in Ancuabe district in Cabo Delgado province. The terrorist base is where terrorists had taken refuge after being displaced in towns and villages now under the responsibility of government authorities.</p> <p>Nyusi added that finding the militants is difficult because many are hiding in a dense forest.</p> <p>With the worsening of the terrorist wave in Cabo Delgado in recent years, many residents have fled to Nampula, looking for a safe and peaceful place to live.</p> <p>Nampula is now the third province of northern Mozambique where terrorist attacks have displaced villagers, following Cabo Delgado and Niassa.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/08 Extremist violence in Benin, Togo
SOURCE	https://greydynamics.com/extremist-violence-in-benin-and-togo-a-six-month-outlook/
GIST	<p>Benin and Togo are the new frontlines in the fight against Islamic extremism in west Africa. Both countries witnessed terror-related incidents increase in the last year. Violence is spilling over the border from neighbouring Burkina Faso and threatening to destabilize the wider region. As such, France will continue to play an increasingly important role in supporting the security architecture of African Francophone regions.</p> <p>KJ-1: It is likely that Togo will suffer from pronounced levels of Islamic extremist violence in the next 6 months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UK government assesses the likelihood of jihadist attacks against Togo as likely. This is due to its ongoing participation in UN-led peacekeeping missions in the Sahel. Its missions could motivate al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) to mount attacks against the country [source]. • The number of arrests on terror-related charges is increasing in both Benin and Togo [source]. Aid groups in Togo are actively working to prevent youth from joining extremist organizations [source]. • Togo's prisons are considered overcrowded [source]. Several NGOs as well as the Norwegian government have rendered assistance to Togo's prison administration to prevent overcrowded prisons from becoming breeding grounds for extremist ideology [source]. • The Togolese army mistook civilians for militants and killed several young men, highlighting the tense security situation in the country's north [source]. • In May, the Kpinkankandi security post in northern Togo came under attack by extremists, leaving two dozen dead or wounded [source]. • Last November, Togo suffered its first fatal terror attack at a security checkpoint in the village of Sanloaga. Militants also forced the departure of villagers in the Savanes region in February [source]. • The militants that struck the Kpinkankandi security post demonstrated moderate operational sophistication. Militants used motorcycles to enhance mobility and halted army reinforcements with a rudimentary IED followed by a coordinated ambush [source]. • Togo declared a state of emergency in the northern Savanes region, set to end this month. The legislature voted unanimously to continue the emergency orders until March 2023 [source]. • Military expenditure has increased to match the needs of the armed forces [source]. <p>KJ-2 It is highly likely that Benin will suffer from higher levels of Islamic extremist violence than Togo in the next 6 months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold buyers in both Benin and Togo trade with militant-controlled gold mines in the Sahel. This creates a cross-border supply chain for financing terror operations [source]. • Since 2019, Benin has suffered a higher proportion of extremist attacks compared to Togo [source]. • Militants from Burkina Faso are reported to have established contacts in villages in northern Benin as well as with Fulani pastoral nomads [source].

- Excessive tactics by Benin's security forces inflame the sentiments of pastoral communities. This puts them at greater risk for extremist recruitment [\[source\]](#).
- The sustainability of regional security operations is uncertain due to the lack of funding [\[source\]](#).
- Benin experienced its worst terror attack to date in February when IEDs were used to ambush patrol vehicles in the W National Park [\[source\]](#).
- The dense nature of the forest canopy in that region complicates surveillance and monitoring of cross-border activities [\[source\]](#).
- The previous attack in 2018 is linked to the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara [\[source\]](#).

KJ-3: It is likely that Benin and Togo will emphasize international security cooperation with global and regional partners to combat Islamic extremism in the next 6 months.

- France ended its military operation in Mali this year. Its forces were replaced by the Russian mercenary group Wagner PMC [\[source\]](#).
- France had surplus forces that it could redeploy elsewhere in the Sahel such as Niger, where operations could continue against Islamic extremism in west Africa [\[source\]](#).
- France will deliver drones to Benin in an effort to support counterterrorism operations in the country's north [\[source\]](#).
- President Macron assured his counterpart in Benin that the delivery of night vision goggles, de-mining kits and technical vehicles was "imminent" [\[source\]](#).
- The US Africa Command is providing training and advice to Togo and participating in high-level meetings between US military officials and the Togolese government [\[source\]](#).
- Togo and South Africa are considering issuing a memorandum of understanding in regards to closer security cooperation [\[source\]](#).
- A South African defence contractor delayed the delivery of armoured personnel carriers to Togo [\[source\]](#). Those vehicles were eventually delivered in May this year and showcased in a military parade [\[source\]](#).
- The INS Tarkash, a Talwar Class Frigate of the Indian Navy, called into port in Togo [\[source\]](#).
- In order to boost familiarity between Indian and Togolese naval personnel, sports events were held. Moreover, an Indian pharmaceutical company provided free healthcare to locals. Togolese and Indian naval officers held meetings at port as well [\[source\]](#).

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HEADLINE	09/07 AQ exploits intel TTPs of nation states
SOURCE	https://greydynamics.com/al-qaeda-use-of-intelligence-tactics-techniques-and-procedures-ttp-of-nation-states/
GIST	<p>Al-Qaeda (AQ) uses robust and exhaustive intelligence techniques. Consequently, intelligence officials of major states fear that AQ uses many of the same Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTP) as nation-states. Its training manuals provide extensive guides on collecting open-source intelligence, conducting surveillance, interrogating prisoners, and recruiting assets working in foreign governments. The belief that it is barbaric and operate in a world of religious fervour does not carry weight. Importantly, AQ is adept at intelligence collection and counterintelligence methods.</p> <p>What is less known about AQ is that major states disseminate many of the intelligence TTPs that it uses from long and complicated relationships. In particular, the United States, Russia, Iran and Britain. Mostly, major powers did this unintentionally. Nevertheless, AQ has assimilated these TTPs to suit its needs and survive in the hostile environment in which it chooses to operate.</p> <p>What is clear is that the major powers have shared TTPs with allies and proxies. This has ultimately led to non-state actors, and AQ incorporated them into their TTPs.</p> <p>1. AQ TTP and the Iran/Hezbollah relationship</p> <p>Iranian intelligence at the start of the 20th century was inadequate. In 1957, the Iranian State Intelligence and Security Organisation (SAVAK) was formed. Its formation is attributed to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) hoping to guard against Soviet expansion. They sent SAVAK personnel to the US to receive training in intelligence and counterintelligence. They estimated that close to 6000 SAVAK</p>

operatives received training from the CIA. Because of this training, Iranian operatives received valuable TTPs from the CIA.

Also, Britain played a role in training Iranian intelligence staff. Separate from the CIA MI6 maintained a HUMINT network within the SAVAK. This demonstrates how [British intelligence's TTPs](#) were disseminated to SAVAK agents.

Following the 1979 Iranian revolution, SAVAK was disbanded and [replaced by SAVMA](#). Many of the CIA/MI6 trained SAVAK personnel remained. Consequently, the major powers TTPs continued within the Iranian intelligence.

In 1982, Iran began supporting the Party of God, [Hezbollah](#) in Lebanon. It provided the Hezbollah organisation with operational support against Israel. Iran provided [Hezbollah with intelligence support](#), also running training camps for the terrorist organisation.

During this time AQ became aware of the capabilities of Hezbollah. AQ sought to increase its capabilities. Therefore, in exchange for money and fighters, Hezbollah agreed to provide training for AQ. Its operatives [visited training camps](#) in the mid-1990s where they were trained in explosives and avoiding detection by enemy forces. They have indirectly disseminated Iranian TTPs throughout this training.

1.1. Direct Iran/AQ relations

However, Iran facilitated a [direct connection](#) with AQ in the early 1990s when Osama bin Laden was living in Sudan. Iran agreed to provide AQ with explosives, intelligence and security training through proxies. Despite this agreement, post 9/11 Iran has tried to outwardly distance itself from any affiliation with AQ. But what is clear is that Iran was still a hub for AQ fighters and leadership to travel to Afghanistan. Furthermore, in 1995, the SVR (Russian Military Intelligence) [trained Iran](#) in the latest intelligence TTPs. As a result, Iran has disseminated the latest intelligence TTPs to both AQ and Hezbollah.

Additionally, leaked documents published by Wikileaks provide evidence of the Iran/AQ relationship. The documents outline how [Iran devised new suicide vests](#) for AQ in Iraq. In the assessment published, they claim that new techniques for suicide attacks originated in Iran and Syria. In addition, the newly developed suicide vests contained miniature cameras that allowed for remote monitoring by the attacker's handler. This level of sophistication points to state-level involvement, most notably by Iran. Undoubtedly, the intelligence and counterintelligence TTPs that were trusted to Iran by both the UK and the US have found their way to AQ from Iran and Hezbollah.

2. Pakistan and AQ TTP

The British created Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) Directorate in 1948, following the decolonisation of India. Because many of the personnel were British and had stayed in Pakistan, any intelligence training they received would have been passed on to their native successors. Therefore, British intelligence TTPs were part of ISI from the beginning.

ISI grew in stature and effectiveness following the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in the 1980s, where support was largely from the CIA. ISI provided support to the Mujahideen both financial and in training. The relationship between the ISI and the CIA allowed the CIA to have plausible deniability. The CIA codenamed this operation [Cyclone](#). It was the most expensive operation the CIA has ever conducted. It also gave ISI access to large sums of cash and the ability to nurture its relationship with the Mujahideen. Furthermore, this relationship meant that ISI operatives were given [intelligence training in the US](#) by the CIA.

The relationship between ISI and the Mujahideen resulted in the latter receiving [training in intelligence tactics](#). This included surveillance, counter-surveillance of targets, moving undetected behind enemy lines and communication security. It was also at this time that ISI established communication with Osama bin Laden.

2.1. AQ/Pakistan relations into the '90s

The relationship between ISI and Osama bin Laden continued to grow stronger throughout the 1990s. [ISI actively participated in leading training camps for Al-Qaeda](#). It is highly likely that they have taught AQ members the TTPs of ISI and CIA, because ISI intelligence staff gave the training camps. Therefore, they would have undoubtedly reached AQ, eventually as ISI and Hezbollah knew the same TTPs. Moreover, AQ actively offered intelligence training before 9/11 and to this day still puts intelligence at the heart of its operations. Importantly, ISI built this relationship to aid in its war in [Kashmir](#) against the Indian government.

In addition to this historical relationship, in September 2019, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan [confirmed that ISI had provided training to AQ](#). In his statement, Khan surmised that even after the 9/11 attacks there were those within the ISI that maintained close links. Subsequently, these links remained until the US killed Osama bin Laden because it was the ISI and Pakistan military that trained AQ to fight Jihad.

Therefore, ISI intelligence TTPs, which British intelligence and the CIA created, were likely passed on to AQ. AQ has successfully used these TTPs to ensure the group's survival and continued ability to target major powers.

3. Al-Qaeda – Learning from Opensource

The West aids AQ in its intelligence collection and development of its TTPs. Western powers aid this by the continued [publication](#) of both military and intelligence doctrines. AQ and other non-state actors only have to conduct a quick internet search to find the latest operating procedures of both the US and UK military. This provides AQ with an updated version of the TTPs used by the UK and US in the military and intelligence actions against it. Therefore, AQ is able to implement more robust counterintelligence methods. This is because it is able to study its enemy in greater detail.

4. Major powers continue to disseminate their TTPs

Without a doubt, the Global War on Terror has diminished AQs capabilities. However, the knowledge gained from the direct and indirect relationships with major powers is now digitised and on the [internet](#).

Because the West continues to support and train unstable states and questionable allies, such as Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan AQ will consequently have updated TTPs. American intelligence agencies have [trained Iraqi intelligence](#) services since the fall of Saddam Hussein, which Iranian agents have undoubtedly penetrated. It is this penetration, given the Iran-Hezbollah-AQ relationship that will keep AQ's TTPs up to date. Finally, in Syria, the CIA has been [arming and training](#) opposition forces whilst this relationship is currently beneficial to both parties. The loyalties of those being trained are impossible to guarantee. Therefore, it is likely that some of the training given by the CIA in Syria will make its way to AQ and other terrorist organisations like the Islamic State.

5. Summary

Major powers have inadvertently been supplying their TTPs to terrorist organisations throughout the last century. AQ has benefited from its relationships with states like Iran and non-state actors like Hezbollah by continually being able to update its TTPs. Whilst AQ does not possess the resources of the major powers, it can adapt these TTPs to suit its goals and the environment that which it chooses to operate in.

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HEADLINE	09/07 ISIS-K steps up attacks on Taliban
SOURCE	https://www.vice.com/en/article/ake7nj/isis-k-taliban-afghanistan-attacks
GIST	<p>Afghanistan's Islamic State affiliate, ISIS-K, is ramping up its attacks on the Taliban in Afghanistan, undermining the group's pledge to end suicide bombings in the country.</p> <p>The Afghan branch of the Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for a string of high-profile suicide attacks over the last couple of weeks, including one on the Russian embassy in Kabul on Monday, which killed eight people, including two embassy staff, and injured many more.</p>

The attack on the Russian embassy, one of the very few foreign missions still operating in the country, was a bad look for the Taliban. The group has already struggled to convince countries to keep their representatives in Afghanistan.

The attack on Monday appeared to surprise the Taliban. Lucas Webber, an expert and the co-founder and editor of Militant Wire, a research outlet tracking extremist groups, said it was “a culmination of years of hostile rhetoric directed at Moscow by ISKP [another abbreviation for the group] and months of markedly intensified threats. ISKP had been promising to attack Russian interests and had also been encouraging its followers to do the same.”

ISIS-K has accused the Taliban of not being “Islamic enough” and has killed hundreds of civilians as well as targeting prominent Taliban leaders.

Several attacks were claimed by ISIS-K last month, including a suicide blast in the capital Kabul that killed prominent pro-Taliban religious leader Sheikh Rahimullah Haqqani, and one last week in Herat that targeted Mujib Rahman Ansari, another cleric. Before the Taliban’s takeover, ISIS-K mainly targeted Shia mosques and other public places, but they have now trained their sights on much more high-value targets.

But despite the massive pressure Taliban leaders now find themselves under, the Taliban has failed to contain ISIS-K. Despite claiming to have everything under control, the group's counter-terrorism efforts have been hampered by the intensity of the ISIS-K attacks.

The rise in numbers of the attacks carried out by ISIS-K has been attributed to the group's shift to just hitting Taliban targets following the collapse of the Western-backed government last August.

Since the Taliban took power a year ago, the overall number of car bombings and suicide attacks across Afghanistan has gone down significantly. But a reduction in violence was an easy thing for the Taliban to promise and achieve because for over two decades, most suicide bombings were being carried out by the Taliban themselves against people they deemed allied with the Western-backed government.

ISIS-K, named after the historical Khorasan province between western and central Asia, is based in the east of the country, close to narcotic and people-trafficking routes in and out of Pakistan.

It announced itself in 2014 and pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, then the ISIS leader in Syria and Iraq. The armed group of local and foreign jihadis from the central Asian region gained [world notoriety for their attack on Kabul airport last August](#) while people tried to flee the country, which killed more than 183 people and injured some 150.

Years of violence have made rural areas of Afghanistan a safe haven for some of the most extreme Sunni jihadist groups, but keeping tabs on them has become the sole responsibility of the Taliban. A pledge by the Taliban to reduce violence has kept their government connected to a number of countries in the region, including China, and Pakistan, while the group awaits wider international recognition that it is unlikely to get.

The exit of western forces and the collapse of their Afghan allies left the Taliban solely in charge of security in Afghanistan, which is filled with other Islamist groups.

“The Taliban is aggressively pursuing ISKP through counter-terrorism operations and intelligence activities,” Webber, the extremism expert, told VICE World News.

“ISKP has exposed the Taliban's limited counter-terrorism capacity and has been able to conduct special operations in Kabul frequently.”

ISIS-K boasted about the Russian embassy attack on Monday on its propaganda accounts and called it a victory over the “crusaders”.

	<p>Khalid Zardan, the Kabul police spokesperson, said in a statement that the Taliban security forces engaged with the attacker, but the suicide bomber detonated. "Security forces are investigating the incident," he said.</p> <p>The attack was condemned by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, who demanded more information about the attack.</p> <p>Lavrov also said that security had been intensified at the embassy following the attack along with "additional forces of the Taliban authorities."</p> <p>"Let's hope that the organisers of this terrorist act and its perpetrators will be punished," he added.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 'Domestic terrorism' cited in Jan 6 probe
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-vb/2022/09/07/domestic-terrorism-sorelle-oathkeepers/
GIST	<p>A court opinion unsealed Tuesday evening marks what appears to be the first time the federal court in Washington has disclosed the FBI and Justice Department's use of a domestic terrorism measure in the USA Patriot Act to obtain a search warrant connected to their sweeping probe into the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.</p> <p>Federal investigators probing the extremist group Oath Keepers on charges of seditious conspiracy last year invoked the provision that permits the government to obtain a search warrant from a U.S. magistrate judge anywhere in the country rather than one located where the search is to be executed in a domestic terrorism investigation, according to the newly unsealed court records.</p> <p>The 18-page opinion revealed that in July 2021, prosecutors asked a U.S. magistrate judge in D.C., rather than one in Texas, to approve a court-authorized search of a cellphone owned by a person who appears to match the description of an attorney for the Oath Keepers, Kellye SoRelle. The lawyer was arrested last week in Texas and was with the group's founder, Stewart Rhodes, outside the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.</p> <p>The opinion, signed and released Tuesday by U.S. Magistrate Judge Zia M. Faruqi, did not identify the Oath Keepers, SoRelle or Rhodes by name, or explain why prosecutors utilized the provision, other than to say it was enacted to help investigators move urgently in terrorism cases.</p> <p>However, Faruqi's opinion quoted an FBI agent's affidavit submitted with the warrant application outlining details and statements that are identical to the allegations prosecutors have made in indicting Rhodes and other alleged Oath Keepers members on the historically rare charge of seditious conspiracy. The opinion related to the search warrant application also cited alleged statements by the device owner on social media that mirror those made by SoRelle, and that could be incriminating.</p> <p>The cellphone owner told law enforcement that there were no longer any barricades visible by the time they and the group's leader arrived at the Capitol on Jan. 6, the court opinion stated. But the judge said the government offered video evidence from the device owner that indicated the person saw barricades and that people "broke the barrier, they got up there, they may end up inside before it's all said and done."</p> <p>Online sleuths on July 18, 2021, identified video posts attributed to SoRelle allegedly making identical statements. The search warrant application appears to have been filed between July 19 and July 22 of last year, based on its docket number and the timing of unsealed applications assigned docket numbers before and after it.</p> <p>A federal defender for SoRelle, who made an initial federal court appearance last week on charges including conspiring to obstruct and obstructing an official proceeding of Congress and tampering with documents, did not respond to a phone and email request for comment Tuesday evening.</p> <p>Rhodes and co-defendants have pleaded not guilty pending trials beginning later this month.</p>

It was not clear how often the Justice Department has asked magistrate judges in Washington to approve search warrants for targets elsewhere in the country in Jan. 6-related investigations — or courts to issue “extraterritorial” warrants for property searches in domestic terrorism investigations overall — but they seem to be the exception rather than the rule.

The July request was “unlike most search warrant applications submitted to this Court,” Faruqui wrote Tuesday. An FBI agent “assigned to a squad that is responsible for Domestic Terrorism cases” cited an exception to the normal rule of federal criminal procedure that federal law enforcement or an attorney for the government seek approval for a search warrant from a judge where the property to be searched is located, the judge wrote. Spokesmen for the U.S. attorney’s office for the District and the Justice Department did not immediately respond to requests for comment Tuesday evening.

Congress enacted the exception after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon, saying it would speed fast-breaking and complex investigations to allow judges most familiar with developments to rule on such warrants no matter where search targets were located. The USA Patriot Act allowed any magistrate judge with authority in a district where domestic or international terrorism-related activities — not just crimes — may have occurred to approve warrants anywhere.

The Jan. 6 attack has been called [an act of domestic terrorism](#) by FBI Director Christopher A. Wray and an assault on the peaceful transfer of presidential power by Attorney General Merrick Garland. U.S. prosecutors [this July followed through for the first time](#) on threats to seek enhanced terrorism sentencing penalties for an individual who rejected a plea deal in the attack.

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HEADLINE	09/07 Raid ISIS camp in Syria yields arrests
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/09/07/isis-al-hol-raid/
GIST	<p>Syrian forces allied with the United States have rounded up hundreds of suspected Islamic State operatives this year in raids on a refugee camp that has been a hotbed of violence perpetrated by terrorist sympathizers, operations coordinated and facilitated by the U.S. military.</p> <p>U.S. Central Command announced Wednesday that, over the last two weeks alone, Syrian Defense Forces (SDF) had apprehended “dozens” of suspects at the al-Hol camp in northeast Syria and dissolved a “major ISIS facilitation network.” The operation is ongoing, according to a U.S. defense official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to detail an unfolding situation.</p> <p>The raid, characterized as a “full clearing operation,” is the largest carried out at the al-Hol camp since May 2021, the official said. It marked the seventh time this year that SDF units, enabled by their American allies, have raided the sprawling desert complex that houses about 55,000 people — many of them deemed ISIS sympathizers who traveled to Syria and Iraq at the height of the group’s power. Each raid has resulted in the detention of between 40 and 120 suspected ISIS operatives.</p> <p>Col. Joe Buccino, a spokesman for U.S. Central Command, said in a statement that, as part of the ongoing operation, Syrian forces on Monday rescued four women located in tunnels where they had been chained and tortured.</p> <p>Contrary to smaller-scale military raids designed to capture or kill targets in the span of a few hours, full clearing operations typically comprise multiple targets and involve lengthy searches of structures, pat-downs, biometric collection and intense questioning. As in this case, they can take weeks.</p> <p>For this and other efforts undertaken at al-Hol, the U.S. military personnel identified the targets based on intelligence gathered from tipsters, the defense official said. U.S. forces spearheaded much of the planning, coordinating the Syrian Defense Forces with the police and security guard units stationed inside the camp.</p>

	<p>It's unclear how many of the detainees rounded up in recent weeks are children, who account for more than half of the camp's population. The vast majority of residents at al-Hol — Syria's largest refugee camp — are women and children considered to be members of ISIS or their relatives.</p> <p>"This operation will make the camp safer for those residents who remain or wish to return to their countries of origin but are unable to do so," said Buccino, stressing that officials' goal is for those at al-Hol to be rehabilitated and repatriated to their home countries.</p> <p>The process of moving individuals out of al-Hol has lagged. Its residents come from more than 50 countries, not all of which have been eager to bring back identified ISIS operatives and sympathizers, or even their children.</p> <p>Most Western nations have only recently begun to bring back refugees by the dozens, while Iraq has repatriated nearly 2,500, according to a recent U.S. State Department count.</p> <p>Almost half of the camp's residents hail from Iraq, and more than a third come from within Syria — both of which still struggle with challenges stemming from terrorism and instability. As such, there are limitations to how swiftly relocations can occur.</p> <p>"The SDF will continue its efforts to eliminate the ISIS threat," Buccino said, "but it remains critical that the international community support this effort through repatriation."</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Audit: DHS failed to vet Afghan evacuees
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/sep/7/inspector-general-says-dhs-allowed-unvetted-danger/
GIST	<p>The Homeland Security Department failed to fully vet some of the Afghan evacuees it brought into the U.S. during last year's airlift, the department's inspector general said in a devastating audit, which warned that some people who "posed a risk to national security" were indeed let into the country.</p> <p>One evacuee, just liberated from prison by the Taliban, was cleared to reach the U.S. Another reached the U.S. and was released, only to have the FBI conclude three months later that the evacuee "posed national security concerns."</p> <p>The evacuation was constructed so hastily that the department wrote procedures on the fly, with screening decisions made "on an ad hoc basis," said the audit, released Tuesday.</p> <p>"As a result, DHS paroled at least two individuals into the United States who posed a risk to national security and the safety of local communities and may have admitted or paroled more individuals of concern," the inspector general concluded.</p> <p>The prisoner was even flagged upon arrival at a U.S. airport. A Customs and Border Protection passport screener spotted "derogatory" information in the system, but a supervisor overruled the officer and paroled the evacuee, the audit found.</p> <p>Three weeks later, the FBI re-flagged the evacuee. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement picked up and deported the person.</p> <p>The report contrasts with the Biden administration's claims of a smooth operation that thoroughly checked evacuees.</p> <p>The audit found that people who gave "questionable" names or dates of birth were allowed to enter. U.S. officials just assigned a Jan. 1 birthdate for whatever age the evacuees said they were.</p> <p>Out of roughly 89,000 names, more than 11,000 were listed as having Jan. 1 birthdates. Another 417 had no known first name, and 242 were listed with no known last name.</p>

That meant they couldn't be properly run against the government's databases, raising risks that even more dangerous people were admitted among the Afghan evacuees, the inspector general said.

"Based on the cultural differences and questionable data in the biographic fields, it was challenging for DHS to fully screen and vet the evacuees," the inspector general said.

Homeland Security vehemently disagreed with the findings. It said the report ignored the department's reliance on other agencies to help with the vetting.

"CBP was only one part of an interagency screening and vetting process and did, in fact, screen, vet and inspect all Afghan nationals" at the airport, Jim H. Crumpacker, Homeland Security's liaison to the inspector general, wrote in the department's response.

He rejected the inspector general's two recommendations to develop a better contingency plan for such events and to come up with a "recurrent" vetting process to re-check evacuees.

Mr. Crumpacker insisted evacuees already face recurrent vetting.

He said the fact that the former prisoner was later spotted and deported is proof that the system "works as designed."

In a follow-up statement, DHS spokesman Angelo Fernandez defended the level of checks Afghans faced, ticking off the agencies involved: "the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and State; Federal Bureau of Investigation; National Counterterrorism Center; and other Intelligence Community partners."

"Afghan nationals who did not clear these checks were not permitted to travel to the United States as part of OAW," he said.

The problem with that, according to congressional investigators, is the checks themselves, which often used bad information from the Afghans and sometimes didn't scour the right databases.

Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio, top Republican on the Senate Homeland Security Committee, called the report "very concerning" and urged the Biden administration to reverse course and accept the inspector general's recommendations.

"I support the resettlement of Afghans who stood in battle with us and our allies over the last 20 years but as we approach the 21st anniversary of 9/11, the United States faces an increased threat due to this administration's catastrophic evacuation of Afghans without rigorous or thorough vetting," Mr. Portman said.

The airlift brought Afghans out of Kabul and deposited them at "lily pad" sites in third countries, where American officials were supposed to check their identities and fingerprints through government databases.

If those checks didn't produce any warning signs, the evacuees were given "green status" and cleared to enter the U.S. without any in-person interviews.

Those who were flagged were given "red status" and were supposed to be blocked from boarding planes until they were investigated and cleared to green status.

Once they arrived in the U.S., they went through the same passport inspection as other foreign arrivals.

As of March, at least 35 evacuees without green status boarded flights, the audit said, and roughly 1,300 were cleared for travel even though their fingerprints hadn't been run through databases.

Customs and Border Protection insisted that the 35 received "green status" upon arrival at a U.S. airport. That was a later point than intended, but the status was issued before they were released.

	<p>The audit said some employees blamed the vetting foul-ups on orders to speed Afghans through the process. The administration promised the other host countries that evacuees would not be staying long.</p> <p>In Germany, where more than 40,000 evacuees were siphoned through the process, the U.S. promised to vet each one in less than 10 days. In Italy, it was 14 days. Qatar, with more than 10,000 evacuees, was more generous with 30 days.</p>
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Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	09/07 Mideast warming up twice as fast as world
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/09/07/middle-east-mediterranean-climate-change/
GIST	<p>Temperatures in the Middle East and eastern Mediterranean are rising almost twice as fast as the rest of the world, according to a new study, with far-reaching consequences for the health and well-being of the roughly 400 million people who live in the region.</p> <p>The climate in countries including Egypt, Greece and Saudi Arabia is projected to warm by about 9 degrees Fahrenheit (5 degrees Celsius) by the end of the century, the study said. Such a rapid increase will cause longer heat waves, more severe drought and frequent sandstorms from the beaches of Lebanon to the deserts of Iran.</p> <p>The changes will also affect vegetation and freshwater resources, raising the risk of armed conflict, the report said. It was first published in June in the Review of Geophysics but was recently updated to include new global climate projections ahead of the U.N. climate summit in November.</p> <p>The study's authors, including researchers from the Cyprus Institute's Climate and Atmosphere Research Center and the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry in Germany, blamed growing greenhouse emissions for the region's rising temperatures. The area's arid landscapes and low water levels also make it more vulnerable to climate change, they said.</p> <p>The Middle East has become a "dominant emitter" of greenhouse gases globally, overtaking both the European Union and India, according to Georgios Zittis, one of the report's authors.</p> <p>"In the E.U, we are seeing a declining trend of emissions, but this is not the case for the Middle East," Zittis said in a phone interview. Most countries in the region, he said, are committed to the 2015 Paris climate agreement, which aims to limit global warming in this century to 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit (1.5 degrees Celsius).</p> <p>The report emphasizes the pressing need to "decarbonize" the energy and transportation sectors in the Middle East with more widespread use of renewable energy, even as the economies of several countries in the region, such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia, rely heavily on "fossil fuel exploitation."</p> <p>The researchers found that summers in the region have become drier and that extreme precipitation and rainfall have occurred in less frequent but stronger spurts. The heat waves will restrict outdoor activities and affect key Mediterranean crops such as olives, wheat and barley.</p> <p>Demand for freshwater will increase as the population grows and there is a strain on resources, the report said. According to Zittis, the region will probably see an increase in migration from rural to urban areas, whether internally or across borders.</p> <p>In southern Iraq, where temperatures have increased by 3.2 degrees Fahrenheit (1.8 degrees Celsius) over the past three decades, families have sold their belongings and relocated to such urban centers as Basra, the region's largest city.</p>

	Zittis says that the transition will not be easy and that “multiyear droughts” and competition for resources will trigger conflicts. “Where there is social instability, this could be the result of climate change,” he said.
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HEADLINE	09/07 First time bird flu found in cetaceans
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/07/health/bird-flu-dolphins-cetaceans.html
GIST	<p>A bottlenose dolphin found dead in a Florida canal this past spring tested positive for a highly virulent strain of bird flu, scientists said on Wednesday. The announcement came a week after Swedish officials reported that they had found the same type of avian influenza in a stranded porpoise.</p> <p>This version of the virus, which has spread widely among North American and European birds, has affected an unusually broad array of species. But these findings represent the first two documented cases in cetaceans, a group of marine mammals that includes dolphins, porpoises and whales.</p> <p>It is too soon to say how commonly the virus infects cetaceans, but its discovery in two different species on two different continents suggests that there have “almost certainly” been other cases, said Richard Webby, an influenza virologist at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis.</p> <p>“Our surveillance activities on a global scale are never sensitive enough to pick up the only two events of this kind,” said Dr. Webby, who was not involved in the initial detection of the virus but is now working with the Florida team on follow-up studies.</p> <p>The virus has become so widespread in birds that it would not be surprising to see the pathogen pop up in other unexpected species, he said. “Unfortunately, I think this is maybe just sort of a sign of what’s to come should this virus not disappear,” he added.</p> <p>Experts emphasize that the risk to humans remains low. In the United States, the version of the virus that is circulating has caused just one documented human infection, in a person known to have had contact with poultry, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.</p> <p>But the spread of the virus to new species poses potential risks to wildlife and provides the virus with new chances to mutate and adapt to mammalian hosts.</p> <p>This strain of bird flu, known as Eurasian H5N1, has spread rapidly through domestic poultry, affecting tens of millions of farmed birds, according to the Agriculture Department. Compared to previous versions of the virus, this lineage has taken an especially heavy toll on wild bird populations, felling eagles, owls, pelicans and more.</p> <p>That, in turn, has put mammals that encounter wild birds at risk. As the outbreaks expanded this spring, the virus turned up in foxes, bobcats, skunks and other species. The virus has also been blamed for a spike in seal strandings in Maine, where bird flu has been detected in both gray and harbor seals.</p> <p>The Florida dolphin, a young male, was found in March in a canal in Dixie County, where area residents noticed that the animal had become trapped between the pilings of a pier and a sea wall, said Dr. Michael Walsh, a veterinarian at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine who leads the university’s marine animal rescue program.</p> <p>By the time rescuers arrived, the dolphin had died, he said. The team, which routinely conducts necropsies, collected a variety of samples from the dolphin and stored them until they could be analyzed in more detail.</p> <p>At the time, the scientists had no reason to suspect that bird flu had made its way into dolphins, and they were not in a particular rush, said Dr. Walsh, who collaborated on the investigation with Dr. Robert</p>

Ossiboff, a veterinary pathologist, and Andrew Allison, a veterinary virologist, both at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine.

When the results came back this summer, they revealed signs of inflammation in the dolphin's brain and the surrounding tissues, Dr. Walsh said. Scientists have previously documented brain inflammation in fox kits infected with the virus, which can cause neurological symptoms in birds and mammals.

Subsequent laboratory testing turned up Eurasian H5N1 in the dolphin's brain and lungs. "The brain tissue really showed a high level of virus," Dr. Walsh said.

Whether the virus contributed to the dolphin's death remains unknown, as does precisely how the animal contracted it. But [it is not hard to imagine a young dolphin investigating](#) an ailing bird near the shoreline, Dr. Walsh said, adding: "These animals are always curious about their environment and checking things out. So if he came upon a sick, either dying or dead, bird, he might be very curious about it. He might mouth it."

The virus was also responsible for the death of a porpoise found stranded in Sweden in June, the Swedish National Veterinary Institute said last week. The pathogen was found in several of the animal's organs, including the brain, according to the agency.

So far, there is no evidence that cetaceans are spreading the virus to one another, Dr. Webby said. And Dr. Webby's team, which has isolated and sequenced the virus detected in the Florida dolphin, has not found any signs that it has picked up mutations associated with adaptation to mammals. "It still very much looks like a virus that you would pick up out of a bird," he said.

But now that dolphins and porpoises are known to be susceptible, researchers can begin to look for the virus more proactively, including in any tissue samples they previously collected.

"Now, everybody's going to be on guard for this," Dr. Walsh said. "And that'll help tell us how serious this really is for cetaceans on the coastlines."

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HEADLINE	09/07 Summer of climate disasters
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/07/briefing/climate-change-heat-waves-us-europe.html
GIST	<p>Heat waves in the U.S., wildfires in Europe, floods in Asia: This summer has shown how the climate crisis has made extreme weather a part of everyday life.</p> <p>Some of the worst recent damage has taken place in Pakistan. Floods have submerged more than a third of the country and killed at least 1,300 people.</p> <p>Scientists can't say yet with certainty that climate change caused the flooding, but experts told me that it was most likely a contributor. As The Times explained, climate change is making severe floods likelier and more intense. "These off-the-charts events are going to happen more often, and this is just one of those examples," said Jennifer Francis, a senior scientist at the Woodwell Climate Research Center.</p> <p>The floods followed a brutal heat wave in Pakistan earlier this year that led to temperatures above 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Scientists have already concluded that global warming made that heat wave much likelier.</p> <p>Climate disasters also hit many other parts of the world this year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the U.S., a heat wave on the West Coast has sent temperatures soaring above 110 degrees Fahrenheit in the past few days. About 100 million Americans across the country suffered another heat wave earlier this summer. And floods have ravaged parts of the U.S., including Kentucky and Missouri.

- The earlier heat wave that hit Pakistan reached India, too. A severe drought also struck parts of India this summer, reducing the country's food exports. And floods in Bengaluru, India's tech capital, forced workers to [ride boats and tractors](#) to get to the office.
- A [heat wave and drought](#) in China dried up rivers, disabling hydroelectric dams and cutting off ships carrying supplies.
- Another heat wave in Europe sent temperatures in Britain to a record 104 degrees Fahrenheit. Droughts across the continent dried up rivers, [exposing sunken ships](#) from World War II and [disrupting the river cruise industry](#). And wildfires in Europe have burned nearly three times as much land so far this year as the 2006-2021 average.
- In April, heavy rainfall caused floods and mudslides in South Africa [that killed at least 45 people](#).

"Some of these events have no historical comparisons from 200 years ago," my colleague Raymond Zhong, who covers climate change, told me.

Why? Rising temperatures create the circumstances for more frequent and more intense heat waves. Prolonged heat causes more frequent and more intense droughts and wildfires. And as it gets warmer, more water evaporates from the oceans — leading to more moisture in the air, and then heavier rainfall, floods and mudslides.

More to come

In my conversations with experts, I referred to the summer's extreme weather as a "new normal." But the experts pushed back on that characterization. They argued that calling it normal suggested we had reached some sort of plateau.

"It's very much getting worse," said Kim Cobb, the director of the Institute at Brown for Environment and Society. Humanity has emitted greenhouse gases through industrialization for more than a century. Those gases are already in the atmosphere, causing warming and extreme weather. Past and future emissions will continue to heat up the planet over the next couple of decades, leading to even more disasters.

That doesn't mean the world is helpless, experts said. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as Democrats' new spending law [aims to do](#), can still lower the risk of climate disasters over the medium term. In the short term, humans can mitigate disasters through adaptation — using better forest management to reduce wildfire risk, for example, or building infrastructure that is more resilient to heavy rainfall and flooding.

(And each year will not automatically be worse than the year before. Factors unrelated to climate change also affect the weather, including seasonal patterns like El Niño and La Niña.)

But poorer countries, like Pakistan, lack the resources to adapt without outside aid. A rapidly changing climate can also upend their plans: After historic floods in 2010, Pakistan rebuilt a destroyed bridge 16 feet higher. In this year's floods, the bridge was inundated again.

It's in many ways unfair. Poorer countries have contributed to climate change much less because they have emitted less greenhouse gas than wealthier nations, as [I've explained before](#). Yet some, like Pakistan, are now suffering the worst consequences of global warming.

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HEADLINE	09/07 DOH: red dye Oak Harbor wastewater study
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/tech/science/environment/department-of-health-study-washington-state/281-629ef062-d211-4b8f-bd77-3e3b933798a3
GIST	<p>OAK HARBOR, Wash. — If you spot red water around Whidbey Island early next week, it won't be cause for concern.</p> <p>The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) is using red dye to evaluate wastewater movement near a newly-reconstructed Oak Harbor Clean Water facility. The study will also measure the water facility's potential impacts on nearby shellfish growing areas.</p>

	<p>The dye will be added to the water Monday, Sept. 12 and will be visible for roughly 24 hours.</p> <p>The fluorescent dye, rhodamine, is a non-toxic, Environmental Protection Agency and Food and Drug Administration-approved dye that isn't harmful to people, marine life or the environment, the DOH said.</p> <p>DOH and FDA scientists plan to add the dye to treated wastewater from the clean water facility and track the water's movement. The study will evaluate potential impacts on the Saratoga Passage and Penn Cove growing areas, where mussels, clams and oysters are harvested.</p> <p>The study is a partnership between the DOH, FDA, the Department of Ecology, the City of Oak Harbor, Island County and local shellfish growers. The DOH is responsible for the safety of commercially harvested shellfish in Washington state.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Intense marine heat wave setting records
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/science/environment/intense-marine-heat-wave-setting-ocean-temperature-records-north-atlan-rcna46130
GIST	<p>It's not just land seeing record heat waves.</p> <p>Ocean waters in the Northern Hemisphere have been unusually warm in recent weeks, with parts of the North Atlantic and northern Pacific undergoing particularly intense marine heat waves.</p> <p>Sea surface temperatures in these regions hit record levels this summer, said Dillon Amaya, a research scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Physical Sciences Laboratory in Boulder, Colorado. Parts of the Pacific and North Atlantic have been anywhere from 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) to 5 degrees C (9 degrees F) warmer than average at times, conditions that have not been observed since record keeping began roughly six decades ago.</p> <p>"It's been very extreme — some of the hottest temperatures we've seen on record — and they've hung around for several months," Amaya said.</p> <p>Oceans naturally absorb and store heat, making these reservoirs good indicators of how much the planet is warming. Studies have found that oceans have absorbed more than 90% of the heat trapped on Earth from greenhouse gas emissions since 1970.</p> <p>As climate change causes the pace of ocean warming to accelerate, scientists are concerned about the potential consequences for marine ecosystems, sea-level rise and extreme weather.</p> <p>NOAA's annual "State of the Climate" report, released Aug. 31, found that ocean heat, as measured from the surface to a depth of more than 6,000 feet, was the highest on record in 2021.</p> <p>Increasing baseline ocean temperatures is worrisome, Amaya said, because it makes marine heat waves more likely to occur and persist for long periods of time.</p> <p>"Every marine heat wave is going to be warmer than the last because of rises in greenhouse gases," he said.</p> <p>Researchers pay close attention to these temperatures because warmer oceans can intensify storms and increase the risks of extreme weather.</p> <p>And globally, melting ice from warmer oceans can speed the rise in sea levels, posing major threats to coastal communities and low-lying infrastructure. NOAA's "State of the Climate" report found that global average sea levels in 2021 rose to new record highs for the 10th consecutive year.</p>

But hotter-than-usual waters also have an effect on the chemistry of the world's oceans, with carbon dioxide absorbed from the atmosphere making ocean water more acidic. This acidification, coupled with persistent heat in certain bodies of water, can have a big impact on marine life, said Kathy Mills, a research scientist at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, a nonprofit organization.

Marine heat waves can, for instance, alter the migration patterns of certain sea creatures, exert new pressure on the region's fish and invertebrates, or even cause [invasive species to take hold](#), she said. Part of her research involves studying the impact of warming oceans on marine ecosystems, and the subsequent implications for local economies.

Mills and her colleagues have found that certain species, such as northern shrimp and cod, have struggled with the warmer conditions, while the American lobster has fared better with the changing temperatures.

"We're trying to understand how this will affect the biology of organisms, the population-level effects for species, and then what these changes will mean for fisheries in the region," Mills said.

[NOAA's forecasts](#) indicate that the current marine heat waves in the northern Pacific and North Atlantic oceans could linger for several more months. Amaya said it's a worrying sign of what's to come if global warming continues unabated.

"There's certainly something going on right now," he said. "This is saying to me that there is something persistent in the climate system that is causing these marine heat waves to stick around for a very long time."

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Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	09/07 Sequim: threatening graffiti at 2 schools
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/threatening-graffiti-discovered-2-sequim-schools/R3JZNUFAWVEYVHBIDRMXH2WZQQ/
GIST	<p>SEQUIM, Wash. — Sequim police are investigating after Helen Haller Elementary and Sequim Middle School were tagged with threatening messages over the weekend.</p> <p>The graffiti was found on Sunday. One photo KIRO 7 received read on a building “be ready” with a swastika sign next to it. On another school district building, the message read, “Sandy Hook 2.”</p> <p>District superintendent Regan Nickels sent out a notice to families letting them know that the messages were painted on two exterior walls at the elementary school and on three windows at the middle school.</p> <p>While the messages were concerning, Nickels told parents on Tuesday, “After review of evidence collected thus far, it has been decided that school will reopen tomorrow (Wednesday, September 7th) across the district with an increased law enforcement presence at and around all of our campuses out of an abundance of caution.”</p> <p>He said that any threat to the students and schools is taken seriously and investigated.</p> <p>Sequim Police Department Deputy Chief Mike Hill told the Sequim Gazette that the messages looked related, as they were the same paint color.</p> <p>By Tuesday afternoon, the graffiti at the elementary school had been removed.</p> <p>The superintendent told families and staff that a theme of “If you see something, say something” is critical.</p>

	Police and district officials are asking anyone with information about the threatening graffiti to call the central office at 360-582-3260 or call police at 360-683-7227.
	Investigators are reviewing surveillance to find those responsible, as no arrests have been made.
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HEADLINE	09/07 Juvenile facility riot worse than reported
SOURCE	https://mynorthwest.com/3618597/rantz-teens-with-shanks-and-machetes-threatened-cops-during-riot-state-vows-charges/
GIST	<p>Documents and photos obtained by the Jason Rantz Show on KTTH reveal last month's riot at a juvenile detention center was even worse than previously reported.</p> <p>At least five juveniles at Echo Glen Children's Center in Snoqualmie rioted after losing free time. They destroyed property, created makeshift shanks, and threatened to stab law enforcement. Staff identified one of the rioters as a juvenile who previously escaped the facility in April, according to an incident report.</p> <p>The Department of Children, Youth, and Family (DCYF), which manages the facilities, originally downplayed the riot, calling it "an incident" that only lasted a short time. But the new documents, along with 911 calls exclusively obtained by the Jason Rantz Show on KTTH, paint a much more dangerous and chaotic night.</p> <p>Why the riot started</p> <p>A total of 32 officers from various agencies were needed to quell the riot at Echo Glen on August 20, just after 9 pm.</p> <p>"I'm reporting a riot at Echo Glenn Children's Center. We need law enforcement back up immediately," an Echo Glen staff member told 911 operators at 9:12 pm. "... I am requesting security. They asked us to call 911."</p> <p>Eight minutes later, staff again asked for law enforcement assistance.</p> <p>"Are they still actively rioting?" the operator asked.</p> <p>"Yes ... we have youths that are in our exterior courtyard ... and they are currently rioting and trying to, attempting to escape the back courtyard. And they are breaking exterior glass and trying to throw the glass at the staff. And then, we have five that are in the unit that are down who are also banging out," the staff member explained.</p> <p>She said the juveniles in the courtyard were "attempting to climb the fence and get out."</p> <p>A responding officer, in an incident report for the King County Sheriff's Office, said one of the juveniles admitted that the rioters "were angry over perceived injustices regarding free time in the unit and that they were supposed to have free time until 9:45 but that it had been taken away for no reason."</p> <p>'Stab any cop' that comes into the building</p> <p>The riot started in the Chinook Building, which houses 10 juveniles.</p> <p>Photos from the scene reveal severely damaged property, furniture used to barricade a window, ransacked office space, damaged electrical systems, and what appears to be a raided nurses station. Windows leading to the courtyard were shattered.</p> <p>Police say juveniles crawled through the glass to get to the fenced-in courtyard. Some photos appear to show blood from the juveniles who cut themselves while escaping the building.</p>

One officer said he observed the juveniles attempting to make “impromptu weapons,” steal staff’s portable radio, and destroy property.

“Staff also advised me that they have spoken with [redacted juvenile’s name] over the landline, and said that he told them that they were going to stab any cop that tried to come into the building,” a deputy wrote in an incident report.

Amassing weapons

According to a Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) readout, deputies said they saw juveniles with weapons at 10:11 pm.

“Did anyone see shank or machete?” one deputy asked over the radio.

“They have shanks,” one deputy responded. “They are separating metal pieces from chairs and what not [sic].”

Then, the lights went out.

One deputy wrote that the juveniles accessed the electrical panel to control the lights and trigger a fire alarm. Another deputy said the juveniles used the darkness to their advantage as they attempted to scale the courtyard fencing. Another deputy noted they were making “shanks and machetes” and some had pipes.

At 10:36 pm, a deputy wrote in an incident report that the juveniles successfully disabled all the security cameras from the building they were housed.

Negotiation and surrender

The riot lasted nearly five hours, ending just after 1 am on August 21. Deputies were able to get the juveniles to surrender without incident.

“Where they [the juveniles] had initially been confrontational and throwing dozens of ‘Tide pods’ at officers, they now seemed more relaxed and open to talking,” a deputy wrote in an incident report. “We discussed some options with them and convinced one youth to come out in return for the chance to make a phone call.”

The juvenile agreed.

After turning himself in, he was handcuffed and then allowed to make a phone call to a girl he identified as his girlfriend.

Another juvenile turned himself in under the same terms, but when he called his mother, she did not answer.

“The next three suspects agreed to surrender in return for a cigarette,” the deputy noted.

Approximately two dozen officers responded to the riot. The Washington State Patrol, one of the responding agencies, brought in a K-9 unit, according to an incident report. The Sheriff’s Office utilized its crisis negotiation team. The Sammamish Police Department also assisted.

DCYF acknowledged in a press statement that “residents engaged in threats,” but did not detail them. And while the statement acknowledged property damage, the department won’t publicly label this as a riot.

“The situation required the support of local law enforcement and state patrol, and was contained that evening,” DCYF spokesperson Jason Wettstein wrote.

Crisis at Echo Glen

Due to the ages of the juveniles, law enforcement will not publicly identify the juveniles who rioted. But charges are expected.

“We are working in collaboration with King County Sherriff to recommend charges for the five youth,” Wettstein confirmed to the Jason Rantz Show on KTTH.

Echo Glen has come under intense scrutiny this year after two [high-profile](#) escapes. It could explain why the department downplayed the riot.

In January, five dangerous juveniles, including one serving a sentence for murder, broke out of Echo Glen. It led to a weeks-long chase, but all five were caught or turned themselves in. Another [incident](#) in April led to an hours-long hunt, using aircraft and K-9 units to track the boy down.

There have been at least 24 incidents requiring law enforcement intervention at Echo Glen in 2022, according to a KCSO memo obtained by the Jason Rantz Show on KTTH.

“In the five years preceding this incident, KCSO has responded 190 times to Echo Glen. Many of these calls seem to be as a result of staff members restraining inmates or inmates assaulting staff,” the memo reads.

When John Urquhart was King County Sheriff (2012-2018), he didn’t have much contact with the facility. But he’s alarmed at what’s happened this year.

“It might be a time for the state to take a real close look at what’s going on in there. Certainly, the riot and ... escape is very concerning,” Urquhart told the Jason Rantz Show on KTTH.

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HEADLINE	09/07 Elected official arrested in reporter's death
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/sep/7/rob-telles-elected-official-arrested-death-las-veg/
GIST	<p>LAS VEGAS — A Las Vegas-area elected public official was arrested Wednesday as the suspect in the fatal stabbing of a veteran newspaper reporter whose investigations of the official’s work preceded his primary loss in June.</p> <p>Clark County Public Administrator Robert “Rob” Telles, a Democrat, was taken into custody at his home by police SWAT officers hours after investigators served a search warrant and confiscated vehicles in the criminal probe of the killing of Las Vegas Review-Journal reporter Jeff German, Sheriff Joe Lombardo told the newspaper.</p> <p>Telles, 45, had been a focus of German’s reporting about turmoil including complaints of administrative bullying, favoritism and Telles’ relationship with a subordinate staffer in the county office that handles property of people who die without a will or family contacts.</p> <p>The newspaper’s executive editor, Glenn Cook, said in a statement that “the arrest of Robert Telles is at once an enormous relief and an outrage for the Review-Journal newsroom.”</p> <p>“We are relieved Robert Telles is in custody and outraged that a colleague appears to have been killed for reporting on an elected official,” Cook said.</p> <p>Telles did not immediately respond Wednesday to telephone messages at his county office, and it was not immediately clear following his arrest if he had an attorney who could speak on his behalf. The county administrator office was closed.</p> <p>German joined the Review-Journal in 2010 after more than two decades at the Las Vegas Sun, where he was a columnist and reporter who covered courts, politics, labor, government and organized crime.</p>

Telles, a lawyer who practiced probate and estate law, won his elected position in 2018, replacing a three-term public administrator. He lost his June party primary to Assistant Public Administrator Rita Reid. Telles' term expires Dec. 31.

In the weeks before the election, German bylined reports about an office "mired in turmoil and internal dissension" between longtime employees and new hires under Telles' leadership.

Telles blamed "old-timers" for exaggerating the extent of his relationship with a female staffer and falsely claiming that he mistreated them.

"All my new employees are super-happy and everyone's productive and doing well," he told the newspaper. "We've almost doubled the productivity in the office."

Telles later posted Twitter complaints about German, the Review-Journal reported, including claims in June that German was a bully who was "obsessed" with him.

German, a reporter with a reputation for tenacity, was working on follow-up reports, the newspaper said Wednesday, and recently filed public records requests for emails and text messages between Telles and three other county officials including Reid and consultant Michael Murphy.

Murphy, the former Clark County coroner hired to address complaints about leadership in the public administrators' office, did not immediately respond to a telephone message.

German's body was found Saturday morning outside his home. Police said he apparently was killed Friday and characterized the attack as an isolated incident. The Clark County coroner ruled that German died of "multiple sharp force injuries" and ruled the case a homicide.

After police asked Monday for public help to identify a suspect, developments came quickly.

Police on Tuesday showed a brief video of a possible suspect walking on a sidewalk clad in bright orange "construction attire" and distributed a photo of a distinctive red or maroon GMC Yukon Denali SUV with chrome handles, a sunroof and a luggage rack, saying it may have been linked to the case.

Telles was seen in newspaper photos washing a similar vehicle parked in his driveway on Tuesday, and KTNV-TV reported the vehicle was towed away after police arrived on Wednesday.

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HEADLINE	09/07 Memphis shooting spree leaves 4 dead
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/07/us/memphis-shooter.html
GIST	<p>A string of shootings in Memphis that left four people dead and three others injured led the authorities on a feverish police manhunt that effectively closed down Tennessee's second largest city until the police announced late Wednesday night that they had captured a 19-year-old suspect.</p> <p>At a news conference early Thursday morning, Mayor Jim Strickland condemned what he called a "senseless murder rampage." He said that he was "angry for our citizens who had to shelter in place until this suspect was caught. This is no way for us to live, and it is not acceptable. The people of our city were confronted with the type of violence no one should have to face."</p> <p>The Memphis Police Department identified the suspect in the rampage, which the authorities said included no fewer than eight crime scenes and crossed into neighboring Mississippi, as Ezekiel Kelly.</p> <p>He was expected to face numerous felony charges and was being transported to the jail to be formally booked.</p>

The manhunt, which began around 6 p.m. Wednesday after the authorities were alerted about a shooting on Facebook Live, prompted the authorities to encourage residents to stay inside. "If you do not need to be out, please stay home!" the City of Memphis said on Twitter.

In light of the threat posed by a man who seemed to be driving around the city randomly shooting people, the Memphis Area Transit Authority suspended its trolley and bus service. The University of Memphis, already shaken by the recent abduction and killing of a woman jogging near the campus, went on lockdown.

At the news conference, Chief Cerelyn (C.J.) Davis of the Memphis Police Department laid out a detailed timeline of the shooting spree, saying that Mr. Kelly's crimes started just before 1 a.m. Wednesday, when a 24-year-old man was shot and killed in his driveway in the 3100 block of Lyndale Avenue.

Mr. Kelly began again around 4:30 p.m., she said, when Memphis Police reported two shootings at separate locations that were minutes apart. A shooting on East Parkway South left a man dead after being shot inside his car, they said. In the second shooting, they said, a woman was shot in the leg on Norris Road near the southbound ramp to Interstate 240 and taken to a hospital in noncritical condition.

By about 6 p.m., Mr. Kelly was on Facebook Live when he barged into an AutoZone store and critically wounded a man, the authorities said. Officers were soon alerted about the video and started investigating Mr. Kelly and alerting residents to the potential danger, Chief Davis said.

The authorities said that he then carjacked a woman, fatally shooting her in the process, at Poplar Avenue and North Evergreen Street.

Two more shootings occurred after that, Chief Davis said, that left another woman dead and one man injured. Another person was also carjacked, though uninjured.

Chris Smith, 47, was shopping in Walmart when she first heard the news that a gunman was driving around Memphis.

"All I could think of was that I didn't want to die in Walmart," Ms. Smith said. "So, I got out of there."

When Ms. Smith arrived home to her apartment complex near Poplar Avenue, neighbors and witnesses told her about the harrowing shooting that she had barely missed.

The gunman was driving down the street when he wrecked his car and started weaving between cars on foot with a gun in the air. He came upon a woman, pulled her out of the car and shot her multiple times, Ms. Smith said. Onlookers told Ms. Smith that the gunman then drove away in the gray SUV as someone tried to resuscitate the woman.

Ms. Smith said she has been mugged at gunpoint several times and given the rampant gun violence across the country, the 30-year Memphis resident said she wasn't surprised that something like this happened.

"It's all too common," she said. "You have to walk around with the attitude of 'If it's my time, it's my time.'"

Court records show that a warrant for first-degree murder was issued Wednesday for Mr. Kelly, though it was not clear what crime that was for. In 2020, he was also charged with two counts of attempted first-degree murder, possession of a firearm and reckless endangerment with a deadly weapon. Then 17, he was initially charged in juvenile court, the records said, but his case was transferred to adult court. Mayor Strickland said he was sentenced to three years in prison after pleading guilty to a lesser charge, aggravated assault, but served only 11 months and was released from prison in March.

"If Mr. Kelly served his full three-year sentence, he would still be in prison today and four of our fellow citizens would still be alive," the mayor said.

	<p>Numerous officials spoke about the recent violence plaguing the city.</p> <p>“This has been a painful week in our city,” Mr. Strickland said. “But I have hope for Memphis, I have love for Memphis, and I know that, united, we will endure.”</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Police: 2 injured in Auburn shooting
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/two-injured-in-auburn-double-shooting
GIST	<p>AUBURN, Wash. — On Wednesday afternoon, Auburn Police officers responded to a report of shots fired in the 1600 Block of 22nd Way NE.</p> <p>Kent PD was already on the scene, conducting a surveillance check on the residence as APD arrived.</p> <p>Before the shooting, the suspect came outside of the home and started arguing with multiple people. Shots were then fired, and the suspect fled.</p> <p>Two victims were transported to the hospital with gunshot wounds of unknown severity.</p> <p>The suspect was taken into custody shortly after.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Capitol bldg. standoff ends; no injuries
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/individual-custody-after-standoff-threatening-set-self-fire-car-capitol-building/FKJMHHT2FCZBNSJRNQNMPPM/
GIST	<p>A person is in custody and receiving a medical evaluation after a standoff of more than two and a half hours with law enforcement officials Wednesday at the state Capitol building in Olympia, Washington State Patrol announced.</p> <p>According to the WSP, just before noon, the person parked their car in the flag circle in front of the legislative building and indicated that they were going to light themselves on fire in the car.</p> <p>WSP, Department of Enterprise Services security, and the Olympia Fire Department brought in negotiators and other resources in response.</p> <p>Around 2:30 p.m., the person indicated that they were going to take action, at which point WSP SWAT team members breached the car with a fire dampening solution.</p> <p>The person exited the car and was taken into custody and transported to an area hospital for a medical evaluation.</p> <p>No charges have been filed thus far.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/07 Law enforcement guilds: public safety crisis
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/seattle/king-county-public-safety-crisis/281-b0d338f6-0e86-49f9-a808-d837908d4eb2
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Multiple King County law enforcement guilds came together Wednesday for a press conference to emphasize their concerns around what they describe as a "public safety crisis."</p> <p>Representatives from the Seattle Police Officers Guild, King County Police Officers Guild and King County Corrections Guild spoke to reporters and offered details on the staffing and process issues the state's largest county is experiencing.</p>

"We are looking for solutions which is why it's historic that these three labor unions have gotten together to form this coalition," said Mike Solan, President of the Seattle Police Officers Guild.

Staffing was a concern consistently highlighted by the union representatives.

Dennis Folk, President of King County Corrections Guild, says understaffing has led to mandatory overtime and employee burnout.

At the King County Correctional Facility, staffing levels recently dipped so low that the county says between July 10 and 11 for about eight hours bookings "were paused so staff could prioritize safe operations inside the jail."

"The command made the decision to shut down the booking area. This is something that I wasn't comfortable with," said Folk.

Folk adds that the July incident is just one part of a persistent problem.

"There is a trickle-down effect that happens with this to where, yeah, booking was closed but they don't see the bigger picture of things that have happened because of that," said Folk.

"King County is in crisis," he added.

King County Corrections is dealing with roughly 100 vacancies, forcing some employees to work 16-hour shifts multiple days a week.

He says those kinds of conditions put public safety in jeopardy.

Solan said there are 350 individuals within the Seattle Police Department that are currently eligible to retire. He added that the department already has lost 122 officers so far in 2022.

Solan says the Seattle Police Department has less than 900 deployable officers.

"We have lost close to 500 people in two years; 122 this year alone," Solan said.

"The Sheriff's Office is down 100 plus officers," said Mansanarez.

"We are losing officers faster than we can hire them. We have about 100 vacancies, so we are sitting at about 400 officers," said Folk about staffing for corrections.

The Seattle City Council [approved an ordinance](#) in August that aims to improve police recruitment and retention.

Under the [plan](#), hiring incentives of up to \$30,000 for lateral transfers and \$7,500 for new recruits will be made available. If hired, officers will also be reimbursed for fees, travel expenses and relocation costs.

The department estimated that implementing the measure and offering hiring incentives over the next three years will cost more than \$5 million.

King County's Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention says they continue to work to fill vacant positions as fast as possible. That is also a focus for the King County Sheriff's Office.

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HEADLINE	09/08 Questions remain Canada mass stabbing
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/08/americas/canada-stabbings-myles-damien-sanderson-thursday/index.html
GIST	(CNN)Three days after a brutal mass stabbing devastated a rural Indigenous community in Saskatchewan, the two brothers who were wanted in the violent attacks are dead, though witness accounts indicate that

one of the men, Myles Sanderson, was responsible for the deaths of 10 of the victims, according to a law enforcement official.

Myles Sanderson died Wednesday after experiencing "medical distress" following his arrest, Saskatchewan Royal Canadian Mounted Police Assistant Commissioner Rhonda Blackmore announced at a press conference. His brother Damien Sanderson was found dead the day after the attacks, police said previously.

Myles Sanderson had been charged with first degree murder, attempted murder and breaking and entering into a residence, the police said Monday.

The brothers' deaths conclude a sweeping manhunt for the two suspects and leaves victims, loved ones and law enforcement puzzling over several key questions that are still unanswered -- most notably, what was the motive?

In response to a reporter's question asking whether Myles killed the 10 victims, Blackmore said, "Our witness accounts that we have received have indicated that Myles Sanderson was the person responsible," though she noted the investigation is still working to confirm exactly who was involved.

While a fuller picture of the violent attacks has come together, there is still little clarity on the suspects' relationships with the victims or the circumstances surrounding their deaths. And with both suspects dead, those details may never fully emerge, investigators say.

The stabbing spree left 10 victims dead and 18 others injured. All but one of the victims belong to the Indigenous community of the James Smith Cree Nation, authorities said. One of those killed was from the nearby town of Weldon.

James Smith Cree Nation leaders declared a state of emergency Sunday in response to the attacks and police issued emergency alerts urging people in Saskatchewan and the neighboring provinces of Manitoba and Alberta to take precautions, including sheltering in place in some communities.

Though the hunt for the suspects has concluded, investigators' jobs are still not over, as the vast crime scene stretches across more than a dozen locations and loved ones are still seeking answers as they now look toward recovering from the tragedy

Here are the key questions that still remain.

What was the motive in the attacks?

Police have said that some of the victims appear to have been targeted, while others were random, but it is still unclear why the attacks were carried out.

"Unfortunately now that Myles is deceased, we may never have an understanding of that motivation," Blackmore said Wednesday. She did not say that Damien Sanderson was no longer a suspect in the attacks.

Myles Sanderson had a lengthy criminal record and there were multiple warrants out for his arrest before the stabbings, according to police. He was granted statutory release from prison by the Parole Board of Canada, according to a February 2022 ruling.

The ruling, provided to CNN by the Parole Board of Canada, said the board decided Sanderson would "not present an undue risk to society" if released. The decision noted that a psychologist assessed him as having a "moderate risk of violence."

Police confirmed Monday that Myles Sanderson stopped meeting with his parole officer in May, which was a violation of his parole conditions.

What are the circumstances surrounding the suspects' deaths?

As the brothers are no longer alive, "we may not know how some things unfolded," Blackmore said, responding to a reporter's question about how Damien Sanderson died.

The day after the stabbings, Damien Sanderson was [found dead in a heavily grassed area](#) near a house on the James Smith Cree Nation, Blackmore has previously said. His injuries did not appear to be self-inflicted, she said.

Investigators have said they are working to determine if Myles Sanderson may have been involved with his brother's death.

After Damien's death, Myles Sanderson was on the run for two more days until police received a 911 call that led them to his arrest.

At around 2:00 p.m., a breaking and entering was reported near the town of Wakaw, which is about 60 miles southeast of the James Smith Cree Nation, police said. Officers received information that said Sanderson was standing outside a home in the area and was armed with a knife, police said. The report indicated he may have been injured, according to Blackmore. Investigators believe he broke into a car earlier and stole a first aid kit, suggesting he needed medical aid, she added.

Sanderson stole a white Chevrolet truck and fled the property, leaving the homeowner uninjured, according to authorities.

After an emergency alert was issued to the public, police said they received over 20 calls in less than an hour reporting possible sightings of the stolen truck.

At about 3:30 p.m., the truck was spotted on Highway 11, prompting a vehicle chase which ended when the car was "directed off the road and into a nearby ditch," Blackmore said in [a statement](#). Sanderson, who was in the truck, was arrested and a knife was found in the vehicle, she said.

Police and investigators gather at the scene where Myles Sanderson was arrested on Wednesday.

Soon after he was taken into custody, Sanderson went into "medical distress" and was brought to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead, Blackmore said. She did not provide further details about his cause of death.

An independent investigation will be conducted on the in-custody death and autopsies will be performed on both brothers, she said.

Did the suspects know the victims?

Investigators are still working to determine what relationship, if any, the suspects had with the victims, most of whom belonged to the same small nation community, authorities said.

Now that the Sanderson brothers can no longer cause harm, Blackmore said she hopes the victims' loved ones can turn towards the difficult process of recovery.

"I hope that this brings them some sense of closure in that they can rest easy tonight knowing that Myles Sanderson is no longer a threat to them," she said. "It is going to be a very long and extensive (healing) process for those individuals. Some of them have witnessed incredible trauma."

The 10 victims were identified by police and Saskatchewan Coroner's Service on Wednesday. They ranged in age from 23 to 78 years old.

Many of the victims share the same last name, though officials declined to confirm if they are related. Six of the victims share the last name Burns, two share the last name Head, and one shares the last name of the two suspects in the attacks.

The victims were identified as:

- Thomas Burns, 23
- Carol Burns, 46
- Gregory Burns, 28
- Lydia Gloria Burns, 61
- Bonnie Burns, 48
- Earl Burns, 66
- Lana Head, 49
- Christian Head, 54
- Robert Sanderson, 49
- Wesley Petterson, 78

All of the victims are from James Smith Cree Nation, except Petterson who is from Weldon, authorities said.

About 1,800 members live on the reservation and the nation has a total population of around 3,400 people, according to its website.

At a press conference held by some victims' families Wednesday, Saskatoon Tribal Chief Mark Arcand identified Bonnie Burns as his sister and Gregory Burns as her son, and he said another of her sons was stabbed but survived.

"Our family members, they'd want us to move on, they'd want us to heal, but to never forget, and to carry love in your hearts," Arcand said.

Lydia Gloria Burns, who was a first responder, was killed while responding to an emergency call on Sunday, her brother Darryl Burns told Reuters. The outlet did not say whether the call was related to the stabbings.

"She was butchered," her brother Ivor Burns said to Reuters.

As of Wednesday afternoon, two of the surviving victims were in the hospital in critical condition, eight were in stable condition and seven others had been discharged, the [Saskatchewan Health Authority](#) confirmed.

Among the 18 injured was a young teenager, authorities said, though they will not be releasing the names of the surviving victims.

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HEADLINE	09/07 Canada 2nd mass stabbing suspect is dead
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/suspect-allegedly-killed-10-saskatchewan-stabbings-custody/story?id=89480888
GIST	<p>The second suspect accused of several stabbings in Saskatchewan has died after being arrested Wednesday following a three-day manhunt, officials said.</p> <p>Canadian authorities located and took Myles Sanderson into custody, the Saskatchewan RCMP said. Shortly after his arrest, he went into medical distress and was transported to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead, the RCMP said Wednesday night.</p> <p>Brothers Myles Sanderson, 30, and Damien Sanderson, 31, are suspected of carrying out the stabbing spree that killed 10 people and injured 19 in the Indigenous communities of James Smith Cree Nation and the town of Weldon, in Saskatchewan, on Sunday, authorities said.</p> <p>Damien Sanderson was found dead on Monday in a field near the stabbing sites with "visible injuries."</p>

Police in Saskatoon confirmed to the [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation](#) that they had been searching for Myles Sanderson since May, when he violated parole by failing to meet with his parole officer. He was classified as "unlawfully at large," Saskatoon police told CBC.

Myles Sanderson was placed on parole after serving a nearly five-year federal sentence for assault, robbery, mischief and uttering threats, according to CBC.

Authorities launched a multi-day manhunt for the Sandersons on Sunday.

The Melfort RCMP canceled its Dangerous Persons Alert upon Myles Sanderson's arrest, saying the public is no longer at risk.

Investigators believe some of the victims were "targeted" while others were "attacked randomly," RCMP Commanding Officer Assistant Commissioner Rhonda Blackmore said earlier this week.

Authorities are investigating the motive for the attacks.

The Saskatchewan RCMP got its first 911 call about a stabbing on the James Smith Cree Nation, about 20 miles from Weldon, around 5:40 a.m. local time on Sunday. Within minutes, police received several more calls from multiple locations. In total, victims were found at 13 different locations across the sparsely populated reserve and in the town, according to Blackmore.

Officials released the identities of the victims killed in the string of stabbings on Wednesday.

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